

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY



133 756

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY











•

## STAGECOACH NORTH

•



THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

NEW YORK • BOSTON • CHICAGO  
DALLAS • ATLANTA • SAN FRANCISCO

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED

LONDON • BOMBAY • CALCUTTA  
MADRAS • MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

OF CANADA, LIMITED

TORONTO



# STAGECOACH

---

## NORTH

---

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST GENERATION  
IN THE STATE OF VERMONT

*by* W. Storrs Lee

---

Great Great Grandfather  
Great Great Grandmother

1791 - 1841

---

---

New York • 1941

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY



Copyright, 1941, by  
W. STORRS LEE.

---

All rights reserved—no part of this book  
may be reproduced in any form without  
permission in writing from the publisher,  
except by a reviewer who wishes to quote brief  
passages in connection with a review written  
for inclusion in magazine or newspaper.

---

*Set up and printed. Published June, 1941.*

FIRST PRINTING.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
AMERICAN BOOK-STRATFORD PRESS, INC., NEW YORK

*To my Father and Mother  
who have perpetuated at Hanover,  
Connecticut, many of the traditions of  
Great Great Grandfather Andrew Lee, pastor,  
author, scholar, farmer, and home industrialist.*





## *GREAT GREAT GRANDFATHER GREAT GREAT GRANDMOTHER*

**T**HEY came from Connecticut mostly—Connecticut and Massachusetts. They were the great great grandsons and great great granddaughters of Puritans, or their relatives in faith if not in blood—escapists from too much dictatorship generations back. Their Sabbath religion was Protestant, species Congregational, but their everyday religion was self-dependence. It was an unconscious faith, a faith of necessity beaten into them by the laws of survival. It was a faith which required that they lay their own hearths, fashion their own rockers, nurse their own babies, raise, card, and weave their own wool, educate their own scholars from the pooled intellect among them, perpetuate the free government they and their fathers had formed.



They were creating the new way of life for America. The Revolution was settled; theirs was the job of reconstruction and restatement. A new Utopia was germinating; it was to flower and flourish; the world would take notice and shape itself in likeness. Their community was to be a self-supporting entity. It was not that they preferred maple sugar to "that dirty compound sold in the shops under the appellation of West India sugar," but using cane sweetening "tainted with the blood and sweat of whip-galled slaves" symbolized support of tyranny, and served as threat to their ideology. Sugar must come from the home acres, bread from their own plowed fields, fuel from their back yards, pottery from the clay bank, wool from their own flocks and looms, iron from their mines and foundries, brandy from their orchards and distilleries, bedsteads from their own walnut groves and cabinetmakers.

True, some of the merchants in town with wares from the four corners of the globe were a temptation, but even they were relatively independent. There were few middlemen to extract discounts and commissions. They sold what they themselves could bargain for on the wharves at Albany or Boston and transport in caravans over the miles of rough road. The spices from Ceylon, the shawls from Tibet, silver from England, were worth no less and little more than the customers paid for them. Cut off these sources of supply and no one would go either hungry or cold. Great Great Grandfather didn't have a lawn mower, a radio in his cowshed, or a checkbook to keep him awake nights, but he had an independence; no strike, no depression, no eco-

conomic blockade within three thousand miles would have changed appreciably what his family wore, ate, or thought. It was his spirit and his way of life that made Vermont what it was and what it is. His are the split rail fences, the covered bridges, the calf-bound volumes of sermons, the fine old doorways, the meetinghouse spires, the Vermont-made Windsor chairs, the back mountain roads, the old stone mill, and the tin lantern.

Deep in his rugged constitution, he managed to find room for the refinements of art, though he would have demurred at calling them that. It was a simple sense of fitness, appropriateness, scale, proportion; it appeared in spite of him whether he was designing a primer or fashioning spinning wheels—and his disciples have been trying to discover the source of his genius ever since.

Great Great Grandfather had to have a trade: something like grist-milling, tinsmithing, hat-making, medicine, law, printing, cabinetmaking. And in addition to the major trade he was expected to be a jack-of-all-trades: to assist in framing a new church, to replaster his kitchen as occasion demanded, distill a palatable brandy, turn out a decent Windsor rocker, and express himself with average coherence in town meeting.

The demand on Great Great Grandmother's virtuosity was no less exacting. Her place as home dictator was decidedly secondary to that of her husband. She took the back seat in the carriage and followed the men down the church aisle. She kept the home fires aglow and the children's noses dry. Her list of chores ranged from hulling corn and running the loom to soap-making and milking the cow; it was a work day of fourteen solid

hours—sixteen in summer. A large family was an economic asset; she would have had the seven children even if she had known all about birth control and biology.

Vermont was in its puberty during those first fifty years after the Green Mountaineers joined the Union, humbly sensitive to character formation. Great Great Grandfather and Great Great Grandmother had their say from the 1790's to the 1840's and the character of the State was set. The climate, the seasons and the mountains helped, but it was mostly the stubborn will of Great Great Grandfather and Great Great Grandmother. They weren't quite gods, and their Utopia was destined to face a lot of awkward human failings. In the best human tradition, they balanced off their virtues with frailties and inconsistencies, with intentions that fell short of the mark. They were terribly concerned about the education of negroes in Liberia, but were not particularly bothered that the negroes in their own town got along on schooling of one day a week. They established rigid church laws of ostracism against drunkenness but continued to keep a good cellar; outlawed dancing, but made sure that their daughters knew the latest steps. Presumably Great Great Grandmother was above giving thought to the inventions of fashions, but she labored winter and summer uncomfortably guarding her modesty under a collection of skirts, petticoats, and bone hoops. Great Great Grandfather was pious to the point of asceticism, but when it came to following the Golden Rule in a business deal, Leviticus took precedence over Luke.

However, their legacy is not to be belittled. In sheer

energy, in creative spirit, and in workable philosophy they surpassed the best of the generations they sired. Theirs was a typical, if not a model, democratic Vermont town—Middlebury by name. But it might have been any other town by another name, with another river substituting Otter Creek, and another group of southern New England adventurers testing their wits and endurance against hunger, ignorance, the devil, and England.

Great Great Grandfather's Middlebury was short-lived. The wheels he set in motion stopped turning soon after they lost the momentum he inspired. His children began building a new community, his grandchildren neglected to place the cornerstone of religion, his great grandchildren discovered the mail order catalogue, his great great grandchildren even forgot his standards of democracy. Only the traditions and the grave markers remain. The same earth is turned on the farms, but a tractor precedes the plow; water still pours over the falls, but it is no longer harnessed to a row of factories. The Congregational Church heads Main Street as it did a century and a half ago, but there's a different gospel in the pulpit. Education is the one industry left, but the Greek room is almost silent.

And the tourists have conquered Vermont; they're all searching for Great Great Grandfather.



# CONTENTS

	PAGE
GREAT GREAT GRANDFATHER	
GREAT GREAT GRANDMOTHER	vii
THEIR TOWN	i
THEIR HOMES	20
THEIR NEIGHBORS	41
THEIR POLITICS	67
THEIR RELIGION	86
THEIR ENTERTAINMENT	107
THEIR EDUCATION	126
THEIR MEDICINE	147
THEIR READING	161
THEIR COMMUNICATION	179
SOURCES	203



## STAGECOACH NORTH







## THEIR TOWN

SWAYING into Middlebury behind two sweating stage spans, say in the middle 1820's, you caught few new tourist sights at first glance that hadn't grown pretty commonplace in the long dusty drive all the way up from Albany. To entertain the bevy of youngsters that inevitably flocked from everywhere and nowhere at the first bellow of the horn, the coachman somehow managed to whip the horses into a respectable hell-bent-for-election gait just inside the edge of town; it was good advertising even though it made no impression on those who did the traveling.

Crane your neck out of the coach window and you'd still see very little that you hadn't already seen in towns like Troy, Lansingburgh, Granville, or Castleton. There were the swinging signs hanging at rakish angles from

the Main Street shop fronts, picturing an oversized watch, an animal meant to be an otter, a horse peering through an irregular shoe, a mortar and pestle; chickens in the street scratching over the fresh dung, horses tied at makeshift hitching posts on either side, irrespective of the direction in which they were headed—sleepy horses that suddenly roused, whinnied, and cramped wagon wheels in all directions as the coach clattered by. There were green store fronts, yellow ones, and brick; and even the best of them had an assortment of first-, second-, and third-hand wares and produce stacked temptingly outside, occupying most of the space where a sidewalk should be but wasn't. And all this was commanded by the white façade and handsome spire of the meetinghouse at the head of the street.

As the coach rumbled over the wooden bridge you noted store ells jutting out dangerously over the falls, and caught momentarily the fragrance of wood smoke belching from a factory chimney below. Altogether it was an unimposing town, predominantly gray. Even though it was a rather new town, the smoke, the seasons, and the dust from the street had already given it a weathered look that belonged more justly to venerable villages around Boston or Hartford. Most certainly the trading center did not have the solid appearance of permanence which American merchants and bankers generally managed to give their business edifices. It was cramped and crowded, as if nature hadn't been quite generous in providing space for enough doors adjacent to the Creek.

With the trail of barefoot youngsters racing behind

the heavy wheels, the coach rounded the corner at the town park, and headed upgrade toward the Vermont Hotel, a neat brick tavern that could have easily been mistaken for a private home, had not a newly painted sign distinguished it. If the church commanded Main Street, the Hotel commanded the church as well as all roads and turnpikes leading north, east, south, and west. Since it was located very nearly on the highest rise in this part of town, the barkeeper could point out from its steps all the worthy features of the village and its environs. To the west over the roof tops you could make out the rough mountain line of the Adirondacks, and to the east, through picket fences and shaggy gardens, you could note the bolder outlines of the Green Mountains—predominantly blue in spite of their name. The College and Academy, the barkeeper would inform you, were on the hill to the southwest; that was the Courthouse diagonally across the street, the long wooden building with square porch pillars and a fan window; you must see the interior with its great galleried auditorium which had served every purpose a public building could, from church and court to commencement hall and funeral parlor.

A brief walk across the park revealed that every square yard of ledge a building could be made to cling to near the falls was occupied with mills, factories, and shops, crowded as close as their competition. Second-rate establishments, or those catering to transients and transportation, grouped about the Courthouse and the Hotel. There were three or four other good taverns in town, but none that matched the popularity of the Ver-

mont which humbly advertised its services "for the entertainment of travelers or parties of pleasure." The Vermont could boast of good husk mattresses, a right good table, a comfortable lobby, and a jolly bar. Here were served the best available liquors and wines including St. Croix Rum, French Brandy, Port and Malaga, Chapman's best gin distilled in the local "mill," and for the more temperate guests there was always an ample supply of good hard cider, pressed from home-grown russets and baldwins.

Proprietor J. P. Carver was the Chamber of Commerce and town publicist; and while passengers were busy over their grog, he lost no opportunity in radiating the virtues of Middlebury, pacing back and forth among unattentive tipplers, displaying his smudged pantaloons, and dosing himself with aromatic snuff.

"You're booked through to Burlington, are you, sir? Nice town. Developing fast. Yes, we don't admit it to everybody, but Burlington's beginning to give us a rub. With Lake Champlain for a doorstep, any town in these parts ought to pick up. That's the difference between Middlebury and Burlington; for us it's eleven miles to water, and Burlington has the Lake at its front door.— Try a pinch of my Rappe, Mister. It's quite superior to your Scotch snuff.— But, still, Middlebury's on its way to being the most prosperous city in the State. Our mercantile transactions are various and extensive. Nearly seventy tons of wool have been purchased by our enterprising merchants during the last season and sent to Boston and New York.— Have another rum, madam? No? On the house then. Boy!— Water propulsion is the one

reliance that favors us beyond anything that Burlington can boast. You may not have noted that we have no less than a dozen establishments at the falls: three flouring mills and as many for sawing wood, a furnace, marble, oil, and paper mills, two cotton factories, one of them as large as any in these parts, with nearly five thousand spindles and a hundred looms already in operation. A very superior grade of fabric they produce."

In the general confusion of leaving the tavern, rearranging baggage, and adjusting preferences for seats in the coach, Carver always tossed a worn quip urging anybody who was thinking of settling east of the Lake to look over Burlington, then take the next stage back to Middlebury. Occasionally his advice was taken.

Great Great Grandfather's house was on the coach route. He came out of the cow shed to watch it go by; Great Great Grandmother gaped from the front door. It was the big event of the week, like a ship putting in at a lazy harbor town—the only opportunity to show the world what the town had to offer. An impersonal smile of approval from an unfamiliar face was as much reward as they could hope to snatch. But nothing would have pleased Great Great Grandfather more than to be given a chance to usher one of these travelers over every square foot of the town and show off just what a spirit of self-dependence could produce.

No one had ever given more than a haphazard secondary thought to any arrangement of Middlebury and there was plenty of evidence of that lack of foresight now. There weren't two parallel streets in the town.

Side streets cut into main streets at every angle, following the original lanes and short cuts that once led lonesomely to a family pitch. The confusion all started in Connecticut years before when the New Hampshire grants were being parceled out in neat rectangles without reference to hills, dips, and bogs. A thirty-five acre lot could look very flat, accessible, and inviting on a sheet of paper, but once the boundaries were actually transferred to terra firma, all too frequently the discovery was made that the lien was mostly ledge or untillable bottom land. Land-hungry proprietors two hundred miles from the scene of their new real estate were inclined to be over-optimistic about the sort of terrain they would draw; Great Great Grandfather never set eyes on his plot until he arrived bag, baggage, and babies.

Fortunately the Middlebury area turned out to be on the edge of Champlain Valley, just down from the hill country and backed by a solitary little mountain which a glacier had dumped in the back yard. Mt. Nebo had at once been proposed as a name for the little mountain and from its modest summit the promised land could be viewed: the broad wilderness valley extending into the haze of distance north and south, the Green Mountains rising abruptly a mile to the east and the craggy Adirondacks across the Lake eleven miles to the west.

By the middle 1820's much of the valley had been cleared and a decent-sized town sprawled at the foot of Nebo—renamed Chipman's Hill. The coach road north and south roughly paralleled the meanders of Otter Creek. A lean church spire marked the center of the

town; the gray stone mills and factories were grouped compactly at the falls and on the rise across the Creek the Academy and two College buildings stood out against a forest.

The Academy and the College buildings were symbols of the social progress the settlement had made in the few decades since the valley was unbroken wilderness. First attempts at permanent settlement had been started in the early 1770's; in fact, pioneer sufferings had produced a respectable community by the time the Revolutionary War was young. But it was shortly discovered that Middlebury was in the path of the marauding British. The first efforts of building and planting were completely undone one night when the Redcoats crept into the village to pillage and burn every cabin, shed, and outhouse they could find. The women and children escaped south; the men joined up with Ethan Allen or other Vermont outfits to make sure that proper vengeance was meted out. So not until after the Revolution did the new Middlebury begin to grow. The refugees plodded north again in ox carts following routes better blazed by the war marches: in summer they came driving their cattle before them; in winter they came on sleds using the frozen rivers for their thoroughfare. In that urge to adventure, the bull dog courage, the determination and an ignorance of despair, Middlebury had its inception. They were the root and fiber of the town to be.

Now, three decades after Vermont had elected to be the fourteenth state in the new Union instead of con-



tinuing as an independent republic, Middlebury was just beginning to reach the full flower of its economic independence. Reluctantly the political franchise from London was swapped for an allegiance to Philadelphia in 1791, but these northern Yankees made mental reservations that their regional identity was not to be tampered with; their self-reliance, self-assertion, self-fulfillment would remain *in statu quo*. Economic independence was the first corollary of political independence. From the very earliest days the manufacture of living essentials became a fixed idea. Sawmills came first, then gristmills, cider mills, and distilleries. Citizens cut their own nails, began publishing their own newspapers and books. If no tinker immigrated from the south, one among them learned the trade and hitched a new sign over his doorstep. By the turn of the century they were supporting their own hat-maker and tailor. Calvin Elmer, as early as 1802, advertised "fashionable mahogany and cherry sideboards, circular, swelled and plain bureaux, desks, tables, stands, field and high post bedsteads made on shortest notice." Smithies took up their slack time from horse and ox shoeing with production of household hardware. As soon as the old Connecticut boots began to wear through, new shoes had to be soled. Necessity mothered invention: Epaphras Miller set up a tannery "a few rods east of the bridge"—always a few rods north, east, south, or west of the bridge—with "sole leather by the cwt. or single side, upper leather, calfskins and boot-leggs of the first quality to be sold for cash or exchanged for rawhides or skins at the Tan Works. Cash paid for rawhides and skins." Alongside

the tannery went a dyer's stand ready to turn raw linen and cotton yarn "a deep indigo blue." Meantime the blacksmith shop grew into a "forge" and a "furnace": "Cash paid for bloomery, and refined iron given in exchange for iron pots and kettles."

"The only object for which men seem to live, breathe, eat, drink or sleep seems to be iron," wrote one prospector, who was convinced that Vermont was entering a new iron age and would find in it new standards of living. "It is sought after with as much avidity as ever was the *summum bonum* of the Latins or the *to kalon* of the Greeks. We arrived here Saturday and having victualled and taken in gin and water, we let on the steam and started . . . and the whole of this week I have been gone . . . in diverging directions in pursuit of iron."

Great Great Grandfather, who cared less for this type of prospecting, could hitch up a team, drive to the Crown Point Ore Bed, buy ore there, and—in quite the same manner that farmers still take apples to a cider mill—team the ore to the Middlebury furnace where it could be refined to order for kettles, andirons, chimney ovens, or plow heads.

By the spring of 1804 Ripley and Atwater were producing carriages of the latest vogue; an edge tool manufactory was in operation; homemade scythes sold for a dollar; carding machines were ready to take care of Champlain Valley wool, and year by year the woolen and cotton business grew with new fulling mills, new carding and picking machines, new dyeing shops, new firms for manufacturing yarns, shirtings, sheetings, gingham, stripes—even new plants for producing looms and

weaving equipment for the home, a new factory for producing "carpets, coverlets, counterpanes and diapers." There was scarcely an article of clothing for which finished material could not be supplied, and the whole system was built up on a basis of public utility—as one manufacturing company expressed its ethics: "They would say to the farming community that this establishment was built particularly for them and they pledge themselves that it shall be faithfully employed for their benefit in the manufacture of such goods as every man wants for his own wear. They do not intend that their goods shall be equalled by any other establishment in point of real service." The company backed up their platform with prices to fit; any farmer could bring in his wool and have it made into red flannel for thirty-one cents a yard; white flannel for six cents less; steel, lavender, and cadet mixes for forty-two cents, "sattinets" for thirty to thirty-five, and "cassmeres" for fifty.

Then there was a Gun Factory where Elias Hall would turn out anything from a custom-built bayonet to a fowling piece; a clock and watchmaker; a saddler producing bridles and boots, saddles and satchels; a gold and silversmith shop where Orrin Stowall labored over every conceivable variety of trinket from treble gilt watch chains to silver toothpicks. A cooper's shop filled all local requirements for beer kegs, buckets, and hogsheds; and Brewster the potter made up many a pickle jug that has long since been turned into an electric lamp base. There was a whitesmith, as well as a blacksmith, who professed to make and repair such household and

professional items as coffee mills, locks, pistols, and surgical instruments.

For years during the 1820's a looking-glass manufactory carried on "just east of the Creek." Here one came for a new mirror to put over the kitchen sink, brought the likenesses of forebears to be reglazed, or ordered a new piece of parlor wall furniture from the assortment of "recent and approved patterns." Hastings Warren periodically ground plaster on demand. John Dike built "pumps of all lengths and sizes," and if a host of company arrived unannounced just before dinner "Will" Andrus the baker was ready to help out from his assortment of cookies, family bread, gingerbread, lemon cakes, rusks, pies, and custards.

Great Great Grandfather always supposed that Eben Judd of Middlebury rather than the ancient Egyptians had originated the machine for sawing marble with sand, water, and an iron rod. The evidence was on Eben's side for he set up a factory in 1806 with a hundred saws to cut out mantels, door jambs, and gravestones for his fellow citizens. Great Great Grandfather had even seen the announcement of a patent "in due form signed by the President of the United States, granting to the subscriber, his administrators, and assigns the full and exclusive right and liberty, of making, constructing, using and vending to others to be used, the said improvement, for the term of fourteen years from and after the 14th day of August, 1822. The most important part of the improvement in the machinery consists in the application of the common wheel and roller with their various

appendages, by which is formed a controlling power for keeping the gangs of saws and single saws in their places, and for raising and lowering them at pleasure, as well whilst they are in motion as otherwise; and also permitting them to bear upon the blocks of marble so much of their weight and no more as is necessary to perform the operating of sawing the marble without forcing the saws from the horizontal direction in which they are set—and further, in their motion and operation of sawing they raise and lower a small distance so as to admit the sand and water under them at each stroke. Any person wishing to use the improvement thus granted by the patent may obtain the right by applying to the subscriber at Middlebury, Vermont, for a reasonable compensation. No person is allowed to use the improvement without permission.”

But it was the shopping district rather than Mill Street that gave Middlebury its real metropolitan tone. Within a radius of over thirty miles there was no settlement that had anything like the variety of barter Middlebury could offer. There were dry goods stores, hat stores, bookstores, liquor stores, drugstores, grocery stores, importers, butcher shops, a furrier, a shoe store, a sort of gift shop, a barber, a leather store, and by 1840 even a music store. But few of these, with the exception of the music store and the butcher shop, sold goods very closely limited to their name. The music store actually sold music: “Songs for Glees, Duets, and trios, new and beautiful marches, quick steps, waltzes, Galopades. American, German, French, and English musical instruments consisting of copper bugles, brass trumpets,

Main

French horns, trombones, clarinets, flutes, flagelettes, picalos, fifes, bass viols and violins, accordeons and Spanish guitars." And the butcher shop actually dealt in meat—except for such by-products as tallow, candles, soap, and calf bags—"the best of meats suitable for every season—no pains spared to please the taste and satisfy the eye—meat delivered at private homes: beef, mutton and veal at three pence a pound in summer, beef at two pence half penny, pork five dollars a hundred in killing season."

However, names meant little at the other shops. One went to the leather store to find a lace tassel, to the barber to get confectionery, paper tobacco, or salt mackerel, to the bookstore for gun powder or a pair of "Ladie's Morroco shoes," to the drugstore for house paint, to the grocer's for rum, to the dry goods stores for snuff, pigtail tobacco, or harness buckles, to the bookbinder's for shaving soap and lead pencils, to the printing office for patent medicines.

In fact most of the merchants of any account offered wares as various as a Sears Roebuck index. Joshua Henshaw was a good example, advertising in 1806 a selection of some two hundred and fifty items ranging from iron candlesticks and camel's hair shawls to branding irons and bedpans. It was the heyday of the general store; Great Great Grandmother could do all her buying at one counter, but ordinarily it was her husband who did the shopping, because the family currency was too unwieldy. Neither metallic nor paper money was a very important medium of local exchange. For small goods, barter was the prevalent scheme of trade, and the two

items apparently most in demand as currency were potash and goose feathers—potash for soap, goose feathers for mattresses. Both were household essentials—although the feathers were slightly on the luxury side when corn husks would serve the purpose. Many a household, however, could prove its wealth by bragging of the number of feather mattresses members of the family slept on. But if a family didn't raise fowl in the back yard or if it required all the fireplace ashes for the production of its own soap, the shopper was not necessarily handicapped. A book could be bought with old rags and sheep skins; a few bushels of wheat and a tub of butter paid for a new suit; a barrel of potash and a pair of neat cattle would bring home a handsome silver service set; fresh vegetables were always in demand among the merchants who didn't have kitchen gardens of their own; a cord of wood was the swapping price for a year's subscription to a newspaper; a bag of flaxseed could be passed off for a keg of raisins; and a few fleeces of sheep's wool for a new anvil. The storekeeper's family needs were advertised weekly in the newspaper columns, and the state of private business was easily gauged by the length of the list. A man only in desperate economic plight would bare to the public as long a roster as did Seymour, the hatter, who offered to take in exchange for bonnets: "cattle, wheat, rye, corn, oats, flax, flaxseed, butter, cheese, maple sugar, beeswax, tallow, port, tow cloth, geese feathers, sheared and pulled lambs wool, green lamb skins with the wool on, iron and nails, oak and pine saw logs and hewed timber, red cedar posts, cedar and pine rails, pine wood, cooper's work." When

Great Great Grandmother needed an Easter bonnet she set out with Great Great Grandfather on the lumber wagon; a pair of oak beams was deposited on Seymour's doorstep and Great Great Grandmother rode away under her new headdress.

Even promissory notes were generally payable in farm and home produce and since crops were dependent on seasons, charge accounts frequently ran up to prodigious amounts, for periods that would break any modern storekeeper. In an effort to keep standing accounts on an impersonal basis as long as possible, collection notices were a part of every newspaper:

“LOOK OUT!!! The subscriber being under the necessity of calling upon all those indebted to him for payment requests all such persons to be in readiness by the last week in the present month.”

After the first three announcements the appeal became stronger and soon the actual dunning started. Under proper etiquette, the progressive dun passed through five stages:

1. “Sir, here is a small bill, I hope you will give me the pleasure of the receipting of it.”
2. “I am in extreme want of money and hope you will do me the kindness to pay it.”
3. “Please to pay me what thou owest.”
4. “I have called upon you twenty times, sir, do not oblige me to call again.”
5. “Pay me now.”

After that a lawyer usually had a chance. Since the newspaper editor was also a capitalist, the dunner always



received support from his column. "Credit," clarified one publisher, "which with punctual men is the life of trade has been the ruin of one half of our bankrupt traders." Occasionally his editorials on the subject turned to verse:

"Pity the cravings of a needy man,  
Whom debts and duns have driven to your door,  
Whose purse is dwindled to the shortest span,  
Oh! Give him Cash—that he may dun no more."

Or the editor borrowed literary form from Shakespeare:

"To dun, or not to dun? that is the question,  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The chilling horrors of an empty purse  
Or boldly dun for all his honest dues,  
And without writs collect them? To pause—  
No more? and by this pause to say we 'scape  
The thousand cures that cross debtors shower  
On those who dun them; 'tis a consummation  
No doubt much wished—to pause—delay—  
Delay! til debt's outlaw'd?— Ay, there's the rub. . . ."

The banks got the worst of this unwieldy monetary system. When the legislature first authorized State Banks at Middlebury and Woodstock in 1806, total capital of \$300,000 was specified. However, the State failed to furnish this capital, so the business proceeded on the credit of the State.

The bank was open daily from ten to twelve and two to four "except Sundays, Fast Days, Thanksgiving Days, Christmas Day, Days of Freemen's Meetings, Fourth of July, Commencement Day, and Saturday

afternoon." Interest of six percent was charged on loans, but sufficient specie to carry on a relatively modest exchange simply was not in circulation in the vicinity. If the vaults had been made large enough to accommodate the lumber, iron, oats, and glass in which the rest of the town did their business, the bank might not have failed. But at a particularly embarrassing moment specie and bills were mysteriously purloined, and the three directors overnight found themselves by law personally responsible for a debt close to \$30,000. After that Great Great Grandfather got along without a bank account for nearly a quarter of a century.

The shopkeeper had labor troubles as well as financial difficulties. Normally, indentured apprentices were his principal help, and they were always running away. Custom or law required that the public be informed of apprentices who had cut loose; and whether the owner wanted them back or not, he had to go through the formality of posting awards in the press and pleading for their return. The advertisements all followed the same pattern:

"RAN AWAY FROM THE SUBSCRIBER. On the 19th inst. an indentured boy to the druggist business by the name of Wm. Wood Brush, 17 years of age about 5 ft. 4 inches high, light complexion, hazel eyes, brown hair, downcast look, a quick irritable temper, heavy walk, bends foreward when he walks, had on when he went away a black broad cloth coat, black silk ninkeen vest, dark mixed kirsemere pantaloons and knapt hat. 10 cent reward paid for trouble of returning him. Penalty of the law for trusting or harboring said boy."

The reward of ten cents was about average, but the more usual enticement was one cent or two cents. A reward of five dollars was ample cause for suspecting that the merchant had lost a right good lad and any figure above that merely served as an estimate of the property which the boy had made off with:

“\$20 REWARD FOR APPRENTICE IN PRINTING BUSINESS. Carried away with him one black broad cloth coat with white metal buttons, one ditto with yellow buttons, nankin pantaloons, black woolen pantaloons, cotton and linen sheets, black satin vest with white stripes, one yellowish cotton vest . . . one pair Suwarrow boots with tassels . . . two black hats. . . .”

Twenty dollars was an all-time high—enough to put a posse of the Green Mountain Rifle Company in motion. The all-time low in currency was “one pint of pumpkin-seeds.”

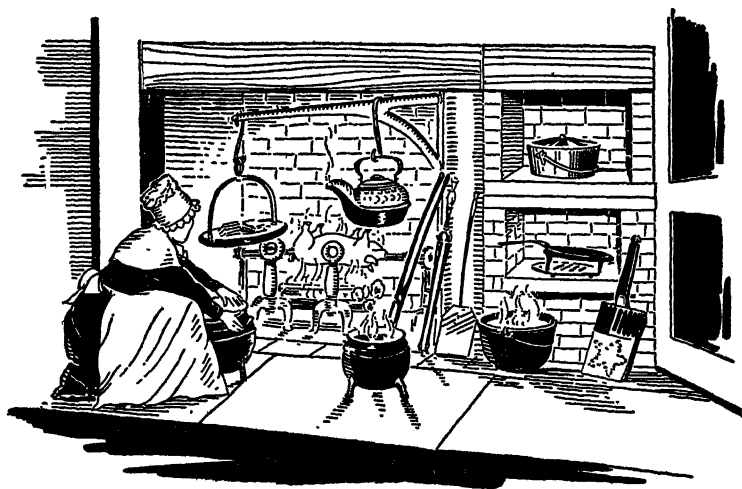
The nearest Middlebury came to a “market” in the European tradition was the weekly auction. One of the Inns was the concessionaire for this institution, and in the Auction Room of Mattocks’ or Beckwith’s a motley array of odds and ends was assembled every Saturday morning: toothbrushes displayed with cigars and screw drivers, padlocks with spectacle cases and slate pencils, kitchen chairs with clocks and commodes.

Few Middlebury shops and few manufactories lasted the whole period of fifty years under the same name; few of them could stand the pace of a town that grew from a population of 395 in 1791 to 1,263 in 1800 and 3,162 in 1840. During the early period it was a third

larger than Burlington, twice the size of St. Johnsbury; it took second place only to booming cities like Bennington and Rutland and was on a par with dozens of other Vermont towns long since forgotten as important commercial centers—towns like Tunbridge, Cornwall, New Haven, Manchester, Brandon, Castleton. Middlebury well represented the middle class communities of the State.

Jabez Rogers is credited with opening the first shop in Middlebury at the north end of the bridge in 1790. Fifty years later the town and village register could list fourteen merchants, two druggists, three jewelers, two saddlers, seven shoemakers, three tailors and eight "tail-oresses," one chair-maker and four cabinetmakers, four milliners, six blacksmiths, two hatters, a plow-maker, a baker, two carriage-makers, two tinner, ten law offices, six physicians, three tavernkeepers, a bookseller, a book-binder, five painters, a tanner, six masons, a potter, two woolen manufacturers, a cotton manufacturer, a card manufacturer, a paper-maker, one grocer.

Great Great Grandfather was by no means stranded in a wilderness, bereft of social comforts. The Middlebury standard of living and its cultural development were quite on a par with those of southern New England. Provinciality was still in the making and America had not then decided that villages a hundred miles removed from the suburbs of Manhattan, Boston, and Philadelphia were backwoods. There were still potential Mannhattans hopefully springing up at every river confluence, harbor, and rural center. Middlebury was one of them.



## *THEIR HOMES*

**W**HEN the census taker made the rounds of Middlebury in 1840, there were no prying questions about heating systems, salaries, and bathtubs. Great Great Grandfather was cornered on the back stoop for the best part of an afternoon sweating out answers by the dozen—answers to questions that made him realize that he was really a home industrialist as well as a farmer, a manufacturer as well as a tradesman.

“How many bushels of wheat did you grow in 1839?”

“How many bushels of barley? Oats? Rye? Buckwheat? Indian Corn? Potatoes?”

“What is the value of the skins and furs you obtained from the first in 1839?”

“How many pounds of wool? Hops? Sugar?”

“How many tons of hay? Hemp and Flax?”

"How many cords of wood have you sold?"

"What is the value of your dairy? Your orchard?"

"How many tons of pot and pearl ashes?"

"What is the value of the straw bonnets you manufactured in 1839?" Let Great Great Grandmother guess at that one!

"What is the value of articles of pottery you manufactured in 1839?"

"How many sides of sole-leather did you tan?"

Great Great Grandfather had figures for all these items and a great many more, but it took an inquisition of this nature to prove how extensive his household activities were.

The family was a sort of corporation, all laboring without benefit of salary; business and home life were inextricably interwoven. Great Great Grandfather might be running a bloomery as a major occupation, but that would not exclude him from harvesting buckwheat, trapping foxes, or raising pearmain. And in one way or another all the family traffic centered about the home kitchen. It was office, craft shop, chapel, milk room, and refectory as well as culinary department—the hub of the household, and the biggest room in the house.

Before dawn, Great Great Grandmother was squatting in front of the huge fireplace fanning a blaze from last night's coals into her pile of corncobs. Great Great Grandfather was already at the stable. He'd expect fresh bread for breakfast to go with the baked potatoes and fried salt pork, and he could count on her having it ready. By seven o'clock he'd come stomping back into the kitchen with his manury feet, carrying a pail of

frothing milk to be strained into pans. At that hour the kitchen was already a confusion of activity and smells: the boys trying to ease logs into the fireplace without upsetting the crane, kettle, and dripping pan, Great Great Grandmother turning loaves in the oven, the girls squabbling in one corner over who had spilled the laundry water, another traipsing through to the back door with the slops from upstairs, and the boarder passively standing by the kindling box whittling shavings.

There was no appreciable letup in this activity all day. After breakfast came family prayers. Breakfast and prayers together were the line of demarcation between chores and the day's business. The work day didn't officially begin until after an invocation to the Almighty. As soon as Great Great Grandfather went back to the barn with the boys, Aunt Lydia might appropriate the kitchen table for her quilting or add to the general litter by deciding to stuff pillows with goose feathers or a new mattress with corn husks. The girls would be assigned the job of dipping another batch of candles or even be put to work mixing a dye. Great Great Grandmother bossed everything from her corner as she rattled away at her spinning wheel. She could manage to do a formidable amount of work, confessing once in her diary: "Began to spin about the last of March—was out of health considerable, was bled, went to see Dr. Bass, took calomel. This spring spun 74 runs of linen and tow—the tow was for my carpet. I have spun *Parmelia's* wool—about 21 pounds, made 23 for ourselves. I have spun 70 runs this summer, and done my washing and days work every day except about two weeks—which

I was hindered by sickness and company. . . . Since March I have done my housework, spun 140 runs, wove 50 yards, made 10 shirts, 3 coats, cut and made 3 vests, 2 petticoats, 8 bosoms, 8 collars, 2 frocks, one night-gown . . . finished spinning 19 September. . . . Calista worked 7 weeks and we quilted 4 bedquilts. Finished night before thanksgiving."

The kitchen work varied with the season. On sap days of March and April, sugar-making took precedence. As the steaming syrup was brought in from the outdoor kettle, she applied her favorite recipe for making the clearest, lightest, sweetest product:

"After the syrup is made, the next process is to clarify it; this may be done with milk, eggs, or bullock's blood, well beat up in a foam, and as there is a portion of acid in all syrup, that prevents sugar from graining perfectly, it would be better if the milk, eggs, or blood, be beat up with a quart or two of limewater, or good lye.

"For ten gallons of syrup, take either a quart of milk, or four eggs, or half a pint of blood, and stir them up to a foam with a quart of limewater, or lye made with ashes; pour them with the syrup into the boiler, and stir them up thoroughly and start a slow, moderate fire—after the scum begins to rise, there is to be no more stirring, and the fire is to be kept moderate. As the syrup is near the boiling point, then the fire is to be partly quenched and the scum taken off. . . ."

July brought on the first vegetable canning. Peas came from the garden by the bushel and all the feminine labor, including Aunt Lydia, gathered in a great gossiping circle. Peas by the thousand bobbed and bounced



into the milk pans. Great Great Grandmother would permit no one to assist with the actual canning; it was too ticklish a job: washing and draining them in a colander, drying them thoroughly on sheets spread over the table, filling the earthen jugs with the peas and mutton suet fat, then quickly corking the jugs and tying a bladder over the top.

Later in the summer there were cucumbers to pickle, a variety of fruits and berries to preserve, currant and damson wine to make. Even the proper care of cider fell to her. The men folks did most of the drinking, but she was as good a taster as any of them. She insisted "that the juice as it comes from the press, be placed in open headed casks or vats; in this situation it is more likely to undergo a proper fermentation and the person attending may with correctness ascertain when this fermentation ceases; this is of great importance, and must be particularly attended to. The fermentation is attended with a hissing noise, bubbles rising to the surface and there forming a soft spongy crust over the liquor. When this crust begins to crack and froth appears in the cracks level with the surface of the head, the fermentation is about stopping. At this time the liquor is in a fine, genuine, clear state, and must be drawn off immediately into clean casks, and this is the time to fumigate it with sulphur. To do this, take a strip of canvas or rag about 2 inches broad, and 12 long; dip this into melted sulphur, and when a few pails of worked cider are put into the casks, set this match on fire and hold it in the cask and shake it that the liquor may incorporate with and retain the fumes; after this, fill the cask and bung it up. The

cider should be racked off again the latter part of February or the first of March; and if not as clear as you wish it, put in isinglass to fine it, and stir well; then put the cask in a cool place, where it will not be disturbed for the fining to settle. Cider prepared in this way will keep sweet for years."

Late autumn also brought butchering season when there were all the doings of a packing house to reckon with in the kitchen; warm hearts and livers fresh from the carcasses hanging under the maple tree in the back dooryard; hams to "put down," souse and sausage to prepare. Her pickled pigs' feet and ears were the best in town, though she maintained that the secret was in knowing how.

"After you have cleaned your pigs feet and ears, boil them till they are tender; then boil as much spring water, with salt and vinegar in it, as will cover them; when both are cold, put the feet and ears into a pan, and pour the pickle over them; and when you use them, take them out, split them in two, and lay them in a dish; chop some green parsley and shalott fine, mix it with oil and vinegar, and a spoonful of mustard, and pour over them; or put them into a batter and fry them, serve with butter and mustard in a boat."

The accumulation of smells that soaked into the furniture, the floors, and the cupboards was a tantalizing index of all that went on in the kitchen. They were all there, weathered, mellowed, and indistinguishable, flavors of soap and brine, dye and maple, apple and onion, but the one scale of odors that never left the room was of the dairy, sweet milk and sour, smells of wooden

milk pails, laden with the essence of cow stable and the curdle of sour cream. The pine floor absorbed and preserved all the dairy spillings, lending to the floor an even stain of grease and to the air the uneven pungence of ripe cheese.

Three times a day the wheels of industry slowed as Great Great Grandmother cleared a way for the current meal. No one interfered with the process. She was fussy and meticulous, but the result was well worth the tension. One eye of the fellow kitchen occupants was on the quilt, the pea pods, or the laundry; the other was on her work as she went through the ceremony of stuffing a leg of veal, alamoding a round of beef, or preparing a breast of mutton. And her directions for roasting a pig were a marvel to all. She went at it as a technician and scientist, expertly handling the animal as if she had devoted her life to the cause of the epicurean.

“Spit your pig, and lay it down to a clear fire, kept good at both ends: put into the belly a few sage leaves, a little pepper and salt, a small crust of bread, and a bit of butter: then sew up the belly: flour it all over very well, and do so till the eyes begin to start. When you find the skin is tight and crisp, and the eyes are dropped, put two plates into the dripping pan, to save what gravy comes from it: put a quarter of a pound of butter into a clean coarse cloth, and rub all over it till the flour is quite taken off; then take it up into your dish, take the sage &c. out of the belly and chop it small; cut off the head, open it and take out the brains, which chop, and put the sage and brains into half a pint of good gravy, with a piece of butter rolled in flour; then cut your pig down the back, and lay it flat in the dish: Cut off the two ears, and lay one upon each shoulder; take

off the under jaw, cut it in two, and lay one upon each side; put the head between the shoulders; pour the gravy out of the plates into your sauce, and then into the dish; send it up to table garnished with lemon, and if you please, pap sauce in a bason."

All the baking, cooking, and preserving were on a grand scale. When squash pies were made, there was squash pie to last a month. At an apple bee enough greenings were pared and strung for drying to last the winter. Butter, cheese, and salt were bulk purchases. "To have sweet butter in dog days and thro' the vegetable seasons," counseled Great Great Grandmother, "send stone pots to honest, neat, and trusty dairy people, and procure it pack'd down in May, and let them be brought in, in the night, or cool rainy morning, covered with a clean cloth wet in cold water, and partake of no heat from the house, and set the pots in the coldest part of your cellar, or in the ice-house. Some say that May butter thus preserved, will go into the winter use, better than fall made butter."

Salt came by the bushel. Once a year enough was stored up to carry through twelve months. It came in big rock chunks and had to be taken to Appleton Foot's gristmill to be ground during the three or four days he set aside each June for the purpose. A single family could consume a vast quantity, salt for brines and pickles, salt for the cattle, salt for the butter, salt for preserving skins and pelts, and a tiny bit of salt for the shaker.

The kitchenware was scaled to this wholesale cookery and preservation. The little quart utensils were mostly

dippers. The standard hollowware included caldrons, skillets, kettles, bake pans and basins by the dozen, heavy cast-iron spiders; and the earthenware jugs, jars, pots, pitchers, and crocks ranged from pint to four-gallon sizes.

Recipes called for pounds rather than ounces, for gills rather than teaspoonfuls. Twenty eggs went into Great Great Grandmother's gingerbread; six pounds of sugar, two of lard, three of butter, twelve of flour, and a dozen and a half eggs were the basis of her loaf cake. Her custards called for milk by the quart, her puddings for raisins by the pound, and her plum cake: "Mix one pound currants, one drachm nutmeg, mace and cinnamon each, a little salt, one pound of citron, orange peel candied, and almonds bleached, 6 pounds of flour (well dried), beat 21 eggs, and add with 1 quart new ale yeast, half pint of wine, 3 half pints of cream and raisins."

The extra special treat for company was Syllabub. It had to be made fresh and it had to be made by Great Great Grandmother herself. She'd excuse herself from the chatting multitude, hurry down cellar for a quart of cider, sugar it and grate in nutmeg, then in her party clothes traipse down to the pasture and milk the cow directly into the cider. She came back proud and perspiring and with the final gesture of a connoisseur poured a pint of thick sweet cream into the concoction before passing it around in the teacups.

The attic, the cellar, the wood shed, and the garden were all part of the culinary realm. The cellar was for warm storage in winter and for refrigeration in summer:

apples and ashes, vinegar and vegetables, soap and salt pork. Space under the garret eaves was reserved for the first curing of apples before they went into the cellar for the winter, the butternuts and hazelnuts were spread there, the onions, next year's seed, the sage, and a dozen herbs.

The men helped hoe the back yard gardens occasionally, but the long rows of vegetables were considered as much a part of the kitchen as the long rows of shelves in the pantry, and Great Great Grandmother took as much pride in the display of marrow fat peas, parsnips, blood beets, and limas as she did in her china roses and dahlias. Her eggplants and succory were the envy of the neighbors, and the martynia, broccoli, and cucumbers were good currency in any dry goods store.

Business moved into the kitchen along with the vegetables. If Great Great Grandfather had a horse trade to make, the final transaction was completed over a glass of cider or port at the kitchen table. Pay trades took the place of hobbies among the neighbors, too. Eliphalet Leonard spent his evenings at a kitchen bench assembling cowbells for the local herds. Mr. Conant turned ink mixer, informing the public that "Its goodness is vouched for, as every keg is inspected previous to its leaving the manufactory." Manteau-making was Mrs. Gowdy's contribution to spare time arts, and dozens of daughters braided straw for hats.

The rest of the house was quite subordinate to the kitchen, spacious as it was. The dining and sitting rooms were used for company, the parlor for family portraits and funerals. There had to be back stairs as well as front

stairs, though everyone went to bed the back way to save the carpets. The front stairs were thrown into service for weddings. There were lots of bedrooms, but they were never all used except when the relatives came for Fourth of July. By preference everyone slept two, three, and four to a bed to fight the cold in warm community spirit. The furnishings were home products too—made to order at the cabinet shop of Young and Warren, who advertised: "Sideboards of all kinds, Commodes, Secretaries and Bookcases, Card, Dining and Pembroke Tables, Washstands, Clock cases of all kinds, Canopy, Field Mahogany and Common Bedsteads, Sofas of all kinds, Cottage, Bamboo Dining and Common chairs."

Patriotism was the only distinguishable decorative motive in the dining room: exciting, colorful prints of battles and shipwrecks assembled from Huntington's bookshop—"large elegant engravings, designed to perpetuate to posterity the memory of the patriotic heroes who fought, bled, and died in establishing Peace, Liberty, and Tranquility to their country." Over the mantel in the sitting room was an example of the "finest ornamental hair work in the most approved style." All the recent dead and living members of the family made tonsorial contributions for this masterpiece of design, knotted by Mrs. Jackson herself, "a few rods north of the jail." The profile drawing at the side was of Aunt Lydia, done by J. Montgomery on one of his transient visits to Middlebury. It brought out perfectly the tiny wart on her nose and even suggested the hairy growth on her chin. The sconces were products of Griswold,

the local tinsmith. The terrifying Bible pictures had been relegated to the front hallway: the flood, Balaam at the altar, the Philistines bringing the ark into the house of Dagon, and something from Revelation. The looking-glass in the parlor was one of Miller's products, "on the east side of the Creek." He had cast and framed it to order, adding the corner rosettes without charge. The painting of Great Great Grandfather and Great Great Grandmother over the mantel was a Tuthill. He had done it on one of his last trips to Middlebury, and the result was certainly worth no more than they paid for it. Even Great Great Grandfather was modest about showing it. He maintained only that it wasn't quite as good as the other "specimens" the artist had shown.

Taken by and large Great Great Grandfather's house was stable, solid, functional. From the outside it was square, abruptly square. The ells didn't come until later. He had planned and built it himself when he was still living in the log cabin. His architectural traditions were as stern as his Old Testament religious traditions. He worked with the same shapes, ideas, and forms as his Connecticut forebears, a simplicity that tended toward plainness. He had allowed his imagination to play with a little decoration about the front door and cornices; and, inside, the front staircase, the window and door trim, and the paneling under the parlor windows showed a touch of conservative originality. There was no filigree or gingerbread—yet—thanks perhaps to the restraining influence of Moses and Jonathan Edwards.

In any case Great Great Grandfather had built for permanence. The best available oak and the clearest



pine were none too good. He built slowly and deliberately, working out many a detail as he progressed. He built for the nineteenth century, the twentieth, and the twenty-first, never dreaming that plumbing, BX, and heating ducts would ever find a way into his walls and under his floors. And he built with materials at hand. Marble went into the cellar foundations along with limestone because it was cheap and accessible. When the timber in the back yard was used up, more was floated down the Creek in log rafts from the mountains to be sawed at the falls. The nails were cut by a local smithy. Brick came from Gurdon Taylor's brickyard in Salisbury at three dollars a thousand. Iron for oven doors was cast at the Middlebury foundry. The plaster was ground by Hastings Warren for two dollars a ton, and hog bristles from his own pigs went into it. Door sills and the fireplace mantels came from the Middlebury Marble Manufacturing Company "warranted to withstand the effects of the weather for centuries." In place of the canvas or linen cloth that had covered the log cabin windows he had genuine transparent glass manufactured at the Lake Dunmore glass works a few miles south of the village. He had lived long enough to be able to appreciate the difference. "Glass," described an appreciative contemporary, "affords for our windows a thin transparent substance which though sufficiently close to keep out the cold and rain, admits into our rooms the cheerful light of day, and at the same time enables us to see clearly the objects which are without." Even the paint was a local product, made from the oil

of flaxseed grown on his own acres—a by-product of sheets and underclothes.

There was a fireplace in every room to furnish Great Great Grandmother with a focal point for her interior decorating. High posters, tables, and portraits were arranged in relation to the hearth and mantel, an assembly scheme *ex necessitate rei*. But before she reached middle age, all this decorating had to be completely changed about. The cast-iron stove arrived, creating a household revolution. It came slowly and experimentally. The sitting room was first to bow to the new age of body comfort. A layer of brick and plaster tentatively closed the fireplace and a hole was chiseled through to the chimney near the ceiling. An ugly box stove and yards of angular stove pipe became the new focal point. The Franklin type, with doors that could be closed or left open, went into the bedroom, because Great Great Grandmother insisted that the transition was too abrupt. She had to compromise with modernization. Into the parlor went a handsome box outfit fresh from the Middlebury foundry of R. & J. Wainwright, made pretty with cast-iron roses and petunias or some Gothic design in relief. The new order came to the kitchen last of all, for Great Great Grandmother knew too well that no stove stew was equal to the kind that bubbled from a crane over a slow hearth fire, no bread or beans could ever match the variety that came from the fireplace pit or oven, and how was one to roast a pig properly without a revolving spit. So until her copy of "New England Cookery" was re-edited, the kitchen stove merely supplemented the fireplace.

Really economical stoves didn't begin to invade the market until the late thirties, and Great Great Grandfather spent his declining years chopping less wood, and baking beside this latest marvel of man's ingenuity, Orrs Patent Air-tight, "the most economical stove in use as it regards the time and trouble of tending, the quantity of fuel required and the uniformity and pleasantness of heat in the room. . . ."

The stove revolutionized home economics and home architecture; it eventually changed the family menu, shortened the wood shed, lengthened the evening hours, and helped to bring on a new interest in literature since one did not have to don mittens to hold a newspaper; suddenly home comfort became an essential during the nine months of cold weather as well as the three of summer. In no department was the revolution stronger than in the matter of clothes. The crimson flannels and layers of petticoats had been as much a precaution against catching pneumonia as a protection of modesty. With an air-tight stove in the room the flannel began to itch and the petticoats weigh. Vermont women could now afford to be more interested in fashion than garment utility.

Almost simultaneously with the stoves, the first fashion experts arrived in town. William Barnes set up an apparel shop advertising the latest, newest, and most approved Philadelphia fashions. Those who preferred the dressmaking and millinery attentions of a female could go to Mrs. Kilburn who came belatedly in the *summer* of 1817 with "an elegant assortment of the latest spring fashions."

Relatively few matrons could go in for the extravagance of hiring professional seamstresses; it was the less opulent like Great Great Grandmother who loved to thumb over the bolts of materials at Chapman's store: the black, blue, and mixed broadcloths, the kerseys, cassimeres, scotch and Caroline plaids, the plain, figured and twilled bombazettes, the calicoes, silk and tabby velvets, the black, blue, and light plush. The simpler materials were Middlebury products, but the really distinguished winter goods that caught the discriminating eye were imports.

Between home clothes and calling clothes was all the difference that might be expected. Hoops and corsets didn't belong in the kitchen. And actual confession of what the human form looked like when not equipped with these devices didn't particularly matter in the home circle. In fact, righteous indignation had greeted the advent of corsets:

"The bosom, which nature has formed with exquisite symmetry in itself, and admirable adaption to the parts of the figure to which it is united, has been transformed into a shape, and transplanted to a place which deprives it of its original beauty and harmony with the rest of the person. This hideous metamorphosis has been effected by means of new invented stays or corsets, which, by an extraordinary construction and force of material, force the figure of the wearer into whatever form the artist pleases.

"A vile taste in the contriver, and as stupid an approval by a large majority of women have brought this monstrous distortion into a kind of fashion; and in con-

sequence we see in eight women out of ten the hips squeezed into a circumference little more than the waist; and the bosom shoved up to the chin making a sort of fleshy shelf, disgusting to the beholder, and certainly most inconvenient to the bearer."

Critics discovered that various corset shapes had been given such disgusting and irreverent titles as "long stay," "pregnant stay," and "divorce stay." The anatomy of the corset (and womankind) was frankly unveiled to the public in the process of grandiloquent censure. Even the moralist had to say his piece: "Vile as these meretricious arts are, they are not less dangerous to health than to morals. The constant pressure of such hard substances as whalebone and steel upon so susceptible a part as the bosom, is very likely, in the course of a very short time, to produce all the horrid consequences of abscesses and cancers. . . .

"No person living can feel a more lively admiration than that which animates me at the sight of a beautiful form. I behold it the work of a most perfect being: the accomplishment of one of his fairest designs; He seems to show in earthly mold the lovely transcript of the angels of heaven; she looks, she breathes of innocence and sweet unconscious beauty. But when I cast my eyes on women issuing from the house of a modern manufacturer of shapes; when I behold the abode of virgin modesty, the tender mother's fountain of aliment for her new born babe, thrust forward to the gaze of the libertine; when I observe the pains taken to attract his eye—I turn away disgusted; I blush for my sex, and can not forbear to cry aloud, 'Oh, that my daughters were

hidden from the face of man, and of woman, too, that they might never witness such prostitution of the female form!’ ”

Long trousers and loose shirts for home wear were as much favored by men as loose garments among women, but for the shop, for business and church, it was Great Great Grandfather's privilege to express himself as colorfully as he chose: red stockings, yellow stockings, and white stockings, silver buckles, quantities of lace, pretty waistcoats and gaudy silk pantaloons—if he could afford them. Though Great Great Grandmother was very neat with her needlework, most of her husband's tailoring had to go to professionals like Huston and Hart (brick building, south end of the bridge) who periodically advised the public: “They have just received the present Spring Report of Fashions and have, at considerable expense procured Mr. Ward's Recently Invented System of Cutting Garments to fit the human shape, from the Beau Ideal of perfection down to the Deformed Hunchback. And they think that a fair trial of their skill will convince the most incredulous that the old term often applied of ‘taking nine tailors to make a man’ has become obsolete and can be more appropriately applied by the axiom one tailor makes many men.”

The College boys did not supply the note of fashion to the town; the town supplied the College. Too many undergraduates were on charity and were looking to the ministry. These expressed contempt for style in laconic phrases: “To see a man's lofty mind dwindling to the dimensions of a wardrobe, deliberating with anxious solemnity on the colour of a waistcoat, the relations of

a cape, or the fitness of a shoe; this is humbling indeed."

Great Great Grandfather agreed with the College lads and thoroughly enjoyed newspaper satire on the shop-keeper's dress: "When he gets up in the morning, let him dress off in the sprucest style—nankeen trowsers, very wide, made 'a la Tarque,' as the size of a Turk's inexpressibles is very convenient, and much admired by the fair sex. Have your hair cropped in the neatest manner, the hair rather close, which will give the head the elegant small appearance of the Apollo of Belvidere. The little hair that is left, should be distorted into a variety of directions . . . but by no means wear any powder, as it will dirty your clothes and give you the appearance of a barber or a miller. Your cravat should come up to your ears, and be filled with a stiffener large and strong, which will give you the appearance of great strength, a natural qualification and useful to the ladies in a variety of ways. Let your waistcoat be very short to . . . show the fascinating contour of your hip; . . . Be sure you follow the same example in your coat; have the buttons on the hip set very close, which will help to give you the appearance of a manly breadth in the shoulders and let the tail be cut as sharp away as a jackdaw's or a fighting cock's, when he is spurred and clipped out for battle. . . ."

In any case there was almost as much talk about male form as there was of female, and both sexes went in for powder and perfumery—probably as fortification against B.O. and the inconvenience of taking a bath. A long list of perfumes, scents, and creams were familiar to both men and women: Freckle wash, cold creams, Balm of

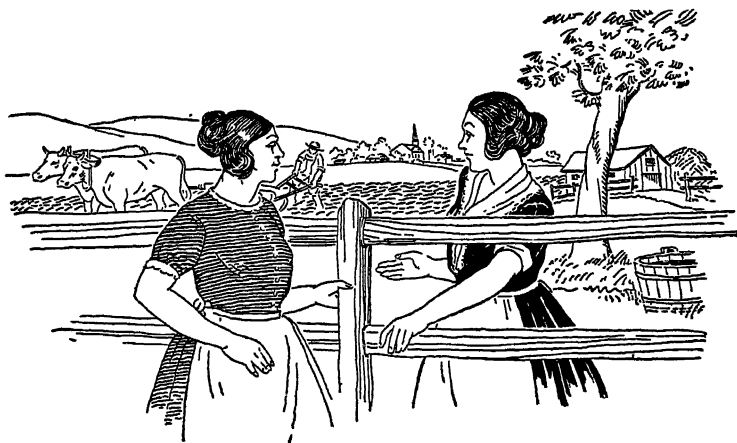
Columbia, French pomatum, almond soap, macassar oil, buffalo oil, Circassian oil, Cream of lilies, Bay water, cologne water, Otto of Rose.

Great Great Grandfather was a conservative. Without benefit of clouded silk stockings and Otto of Rose he courted Great Great Grandmother—before the ceremony—ogled her in church, danced with her at parties in the Chipmans' or Painters' front rooms, or sat with her in the kitchen keeping a respectable distance. He agreed with the Reverend Martin Sherlock: "Woman is a very nice and very complicated machine. Her springs are infinitely delicate, and differ from those of men, pretty much as the work of a repetition watch does that of a town clock.— Look at her, how delicately formed! Examine her senses, how exquisite and nice! Observe her understanding; how subtle and accurate! But look into her heart; there is the watch-work, composed of parts so minute in themselves, and so wonderfully combined, that they must be seen by a microscopic eye to be clearly apprehended."

Great Great Grandfather's microscopic eye could size up his lady. He knew it wasn't clothes and corsets that made the woman. He wanted a home girl, though his name for it was "home body." And he got her. She was capable of tending the fires as well as the loom, milking the cow as well as chanting a lullaby to the children. She could barter advantageously with the closest of the merchants, hold her own with the would-be socialites in town, and walk into church with an air. The kitchen was her throne room; she mothered and governed the procession of household production and enterprise that



passed before her. It was she who regulated imperceptibly a democratic nation, a democratic town, and a democratic New England home—nucleus of the self-reliant Vermont spirit.



## THEIR NEIGHBORS

GREAT GREAT GRANDFATHER wasn't responsible for starting the rumor that Vermonters are taciturn. Talking was their one social indulgence. When topics for home exposition became overworked, Great Great Grandmother called on the neighbors. What talk she brought back for airing was rather small, but it wasn't treated that way. The case of Zachariah Beckwith and a strange woman, accidentally seen together in private, was examined, cross-examined, supported and refuted, qualified and provisoed at dinner, and pigeonholed for review at supper—pending further evidence. In spite of the woods, no one's life was very private. Gossip was the principal form of publication and no one was beyond its reach; Middlebury was one big family—sometimes happy, sometimes not. The individual family was the

core of society; family loyalties came first, but the loyalties and interests of one family were interwoven with others. As settlers they had shared common hardships and as Freeholders in a swiftly developing community they had common ties.

When Great Great Grandfather and Great Great Grandmother dropped in at the neighbor's for an evening of gossip they expected to sit in the kitchen and help carry on with whatever job was in progress. At the rattle of wheels in the drive, nobody hurried upstairs to change an apron or dirty kerchief. If the kitchen was untidy, it remained untidy. Things were taken at their face value. And there were no class distinctions among visitors; about the same rules applied to professional folk as to laborers.

"I find it pleases people most to have me sociable," explained the schoolmaster, lodged in a rural home. "I am boarded around here and there and have a chance to see a little of everything. Last night in the room where I was (the only one there was except bedrooms) there was one a cutting sassage meat, one a churning, one pairing apples with a pairing machine with two or three great baskets around him, and two cutting up the apples and boiling apple sauce. All this business was going on in one room, and you may judge how well I could study. In fact I did not try. I put the best face on the matter I could and took hold and cut sassage meat all the evening. And now I sit writing in one corner, and they are stuffing sassage meat and quartering apples with noise enough to deafen a sawmill. . . ."

There was no dearth of variety in this democratic so-

ciety. Doctors and professors, millers and tanners, editors and inventors—Great Great Grandfather knew them all and they all knew him. Since his major interest was agriculture, he was closest to people like the Goodriches. There were three families of them but he liked Amos the best of the lot. Amos was rough, tough, and hardy and he stammered just enough to be entertaining. Fortunately Amos knew his speech was mildly entertaining and didn't care. The defect had kept him out of the Revolution and it kept him out of very active participation in politics, but he loved to brag in his old age that he'd "v-v-voted for every w-w-winning president from W-W-Washington down." He had walked up from Glastonbury, Connecticut, in 1784, and when he arrived at the falls the only shelter in the vicinity was "Hop" Johnson's place. "Hop," in a squalid hut on the river bank, bedded down his guests on the family straw for a fee, fed them out of the family kettle for a fee, and ferried them across the creek on his raft for still another consideration. "Hop" made a pretty good thing out of his concession for four or five years and on the side accumulated as big a family as that many seasons would account for; then, without a word to anybody, one night he pocketed the till and disappeared. Nobody ever heard from him again. The wife and kids continued to run the ferry until they were thrown out of business by Foot and his following who started building a log bridge practically over the heads of the gaping litter.

Amos Goodrich had in his head and on his faltering tongue all the pioneer tales of the town. He'd had the experience of getting lost in the "dense hemlock forest"

that covered the area where the village spread out populously a few years later; he had spent the best part of a year with nothing but a few strips of bark for a roof and a few slabs of bass-wood logs to keep off the wind, and he claimed he had never after been happier than he was then. His stories of bears could quicken the blood of the most venturesome juveniles. And he had a tall fish story about finding under water at the foot of the falls a white rock covered with trout. He dashed back to a house, plucked a tooth from a flax hatchel, bent it into a hook, tied on a tow string, and as fast as he could work pulled out nine "trouts," hooking them by the gills. Not one of them weighed less than a pound and a half.

Amos's father, Captain Stephen, could match any story his son produced and he had wider territory from which to draw. The Captain had fought at both Bunker Hill and Saratoga but none of the resistance the British put up against his company ever strained his wits as did five cows and six hogs which he drove two hundred and fifty miles from Connecticut to Vermont. Stephen figured he covered five miles in circles for every one they advanced north: hogs lagging behind to root in a swamp while cows wandered ahead to get lost in a thicket. Prodding, coaxing, and lashing, he had to be everywhere at once from dawn until dark during the two weeks of trail pioneering. His mother and sister managed the oxen and cart with their precious goods and every night the livestock had to be rounded up in an improvised barnyard. The family lived principally on their traveling dairy; a good supply of cream each morning was poured into a churn in the cart, and by midday, thanks to the

stumps and rocks in the road, there was fresh butter for dinner. The hogs were baited along with pans of left-over milk.

On arrival in Middlebury the Captain became a fast friend of the most famous woman living in Vermont, "Widow Story"—the only lady who in turn had defied the British, Indians, and starvation, and remained on the edge of town during all four years of the War, hiding in a dugout on the creek with her children. Great Great Grandmother was among the throng of Middleburians who finally saw the Widow happily married off to Captain Goodrich in their old age.

The majority of Great Great Grandfather's neighbors were of the Goodrich type, sturdy Connecticut stock with a flair for wilderness adventure, pillars of the church, natural agronomists, plowmen, planters, lumberjacks. The source of livelihood for the community was the soil and the barnyard. Household manufacturing and crude public utilities like the sawmills and gristmills, the distillery, the potash works, the woolen mills, merely served the farmer. Almost everyone had at least a big garden and cow, and those who had money to put into mills usually had first developed their acres for tillage.

Gamaliel Painter, even in his day, had established himself as the father of the town and no one exemplified better than he the fundamental Middlebury economic doctrine. He was farmer, miller, soldier, woodsman, politician, real estate agent, surveyor, churchman, educator, legislator, and judge—a man of parts if there ever was one in the State—and besides he had successfully

tried his talents as an idiot salesman of wildflowers and tarts among the British, while picking up information on their War maneuvers.

More fortunate than most of his companions, Painter had a nest egg of a few hundred dollars when he came to Middlebury. His was one of the first stakes in the region, two hundred acres on the south border of the town, but he'd hardly finished building a house and moving his family into it when the Surveyor General discovered a mistake had been made in laying out the town boundaries. Since his property was on the line in question, his ownership of a hundred and seventy acres was wiped off the books with a gesture, but he held out for at least the privilege of pitching elsewhere and, since no one else wanted the thicket around the falls, he took that. Then and there he decided that the falls should be the center of the town anyway. His whim proved more substantial than even he had dreamed. He built a gristmill and a sawmill on the Creek and shortly dozens of new arrivals wanted a parcel of his land—particularly those with mercantile or professional interests. To worthy immigrants he sold lots for a tavern, a printing office, a hatter's shop, more mills, a silversmith shop, law offices, a blacksmith shop, a doctor's office, a brewery, a tannery, an assortment of stores, and dozens of building lots. He didn't need to worry about finances after that. He could afford to be town philanthropist, but with all the new political and church jobs that were wished onto him as a result of his being the squire, he never lost his common touch—nor his farm. Returns from his land went right back into the town. Horse

breeding was one of his first new interests. In no way could he help along the cause of agriculture better than by introducing better horses. From the spring of 1802 on, his advertisement of famous sires appeared in the papers: "The noted horse ACTIVE stands at Gamaliel Painter's stable to be let to mares at ten dollars the season . . . wheat, corn or oats will be received for pay, if delivered by the first of January next." "Gamaliel Painter's full-blooded Arabian horse YOUNG DEY OF ALGIERS will stand at the stable . . . the greatest acquisition to our breed of horses which the country has gained since the importation of the RANGER . . . elegant saddle horse." Then there were OLD CINCINNATUS at eight dollars the season, PERSISTENT at four dollars, and YOUNG ALL-FOURS at two dollars.

Painter was the first town representative, one of the first judges, the sheriff, a church founder, the number-one trustee for both the Grammar School and the College. He was more the quiet politician than statesman, more the lobbyist than politician, more lawgiver than lawyer—a homespun diplomat, slow of speech, but public spirited, generous, far-sighted, and above all possessing unbounded energy, balanced with a fund of uncommon Yankee ingenuity, tact, and wisdom. Every committee of responsibility had to have him as a member. He could have been an aristocrat, but he preferred not to be. "Painter is one of your long-headed fellows who slies around, but brings things about," Captain Goodrich used to say. "Painter would work out-of-doors and carry his point." His lobbying technique brought him his share of local enemies, but popular vote in the end al-



ways gave him right of way, principally because he shared and was ready to share all the hardships to which his neighbors were exposed; famine, fire, and disaster knocked at his front door too. His house in the village was burned, death claimed his first wife and his second, a daughter and two sons in quick succession—one by drowning. He told the pathetic story of Samuel's drowning illiterately but graphically:

"If posable I will calm my troubled mind and give you a history of the different vicissitudes of life that has past in my famaly scince I saw you—I will begin. . . . Devine Providence has blessed us with a fine promising daughter seven months old, Mrs. Painter has injoyed her helth. . . . Now permit me to chainge the scene and bring forward the dark and gloomy. . . . On Wednesday of last week I received an invitation to dine at Major Chipmans in company with Mr. Beleme of Vergennes which I excepted. Just as we were about to sit off, Mr. Southword came with an invitation for us to take tea at Col. Stores in company with the Rev. Mr. Ball, minister in Rutland, which we concluded to except on condition we returned from Mr. Chipmans in time. . . . I took Mrs. Painter, Esther, and my little infant Abigail in the waggon, and road to Major Chipmans . . . after dinner walked out into the garden and after taking a view of the works of nature and art, ware returning to the house. Saw Esq. Miller riding full speed whose looks bespoke distress. He informed me that Mr. Southword was drowned at the half mile bridge and was taken out of the water before he came away and that he was afraid that Sama was drowned as they did not know where he was and did not know but he might go to bathe with him. That was all the information that he gave. We jumped into the waggon and after riding near two miles without ther being a word spoke, I told Mrs. Painter that Samas fate was deter-

mined . . . when we arrived at my house, found it surrounded with people. When we entered the door found Sama a lifeless corps. . . . Sama and he had some conversation concerning going to the creek to bathe. One says to the other the weather was to very hot; that he thought it would be preditiot to their health. The other for answer say that they had not been exercising and ther blood was cool. They went off and agreed to return in about an hour to dine. The next that was heard (which was about an hour after) was the cry of people drowning and every parson runing to the place not knowing who untill there cloaths was found. . . . They give no account of Sama; he was found near the middle of the creek where the water was twenty feet deep. How it all hapened to be, God only knowes; we never expect to git any further information. . . .”

Gamaliel's adventures in Vermont phonetics readily disclosed that his formal education amounted to little—only a few years of common school in Connecticut—but his position in the town, in spite of the lack of education, was good testimony to the nature of Vermont democracy.

Middlebury was overrun with lawyers—mostly college men from institutions like Yale, Dartmouth, and Williams. Because of their legal training they had either directly or indirectly their full share of say on how town affairs were directed, but Middlebury suffered no rule of the educated aristocracy. The trio that had more influence than any others during the formative decades were Samuel Miller, John Chipman, and Gamaliel, and as one of their competing politicians once remarked, “The influence of Painter with his cunning, Chipman

with his argument, and Miller with his courteous address would, if it were possible, deceive the very elect."

John Chipman was a tough Green Mountain boy who had survived all the predicaments into which his friend Ethan Allen had inveigled him. Captain John had been one of Ethan's right-hand men when he took over Fort Ticonderoga, and the passing of years after that never robbed him of any of his tenacity—"a man of honor and honored by all who knew him, he would rather be on the side of right than have right on his side, he wouldn't vend shoddy to the government, water his milk, sand his sugar, or oil his wool . . . he didn't need an office to make him a gentleman, or a gig to make him respectable . . . was one of the people, believed in the people; he wouldn't prove or publish his democracy by going to church or into his parlor in his shirt-sleeves, insulting all the dignities, putting his heel upon all the little elegancies . . . wouldn't persist in eating with an iron knife if a silver fork lay by him, and yet wouldn't starve rather than use the knife."

Gamaliel had married John's sister, so everything they did was more or less in the family. Together they had cleared their first acres in the town, together built their first houses. John didn't have the money that his brother-in-law had, so he had to turn his house into a tavern as soon as it was built, to pay off the mortgage. Mrs. Chipman was the matron of the establishment and confided to Great Great Grandmother that she always kept one of her own towels out for the guests, but when specially smart-appearing customers came in for the night, as soon as they had gone to bed, she borrowed

the towel, ran down to the river, and washed and ironed it so it would be clean for the honored travelers in the morning. John had a long assorted list of titles which he could properly affix to his name to serve the occasion: Major, Colonel, Moderator, Selectman, Sheriff.

Sam Miller was legal adviser for the rest of the trio. He had gathered a little more formal education than Gamaliel, but not much more. By virtue of private study with a lawyer in Wallingford he had been admitted to the bar before he came to Middlebury as the town's first lawyer. He looked more like a college president than a backwoods lawyer, and once out of modesty even turned down a good chance to become Governor. He disguised his legal erudition and sense of humor behind a slightly sour expression, but once he opened up in court, his listeners—particularly the defense—were conscious only of a witty lawyer, forcibly, systematically, and nervously pouring forth an irrefutable line of argument.

Often there were more resident lawyers in town than college professors and Great Great Grandfather could never figure out where they got all their trade. They covered a wide area and were frequently called on to take cases in remote parts of the State. They were as competent lawyers as could be found in Vermont and Daniel Chipman's law school was important enough to draw an unreasonably large number for such a small community. But all of them were not as reliable as Sam Miller. The case of Almena Hall versus Elias Hall brought out that fact.

Elias stated his own prologue to this case: "I have

never had the benefit of even a common school education. In this situation, wholly destitute of any knowledge of the most simple rules of common arithmetic, without property, and ignorant of any trade, at the age of nineteen, I went into the world penniless. After about ten years' industry, and the most rigid economy, I found by estimation, that I had acquired from ten to twelve thousand dollars worth of property; consisting of building lots and buildings in Middlebury, wild lands, mills, etc.; but never commanded much money. I had acquired the whole by my own industry and hard earnings, and not by speculation. I was ignorant of the designing subtlety of which some women are capable of practising to ensnare an unlearned man, whose opportunities to acquire information, have been prescribed by continual labor, within very narrow limits. But I have since learned by sad and woful experience, that 'the lips of a strange woman, drop as an honey comb; and her mouth is smoother than oil; but her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two edged sword; her feet go down to death, her steps take hold on hell.' "

By trade Elias was a gunsmith—a small-town boy who had never seen much of the world and what he had seen within the narrow confines of his shop on a side street near the falls, he assumed to be representative. He was innocent and naïve, ingenuous and miserly. He didn't keep his money to himself on purpose; he had no luxuries or indulgences on which he cared to spend it. He ran little ads in the newspapers: "Guns and Bayonets. Hunting and fowling pieces. Gunsmithy near the stone factory." He had a Middlebury monopoly on gun busi-

ness and gun repairing and it was remunerative. His retiring nature seldom permitted his making public appearances and as the years went by, everybody assumed that he was salting away a fortune and one day would let the world know about it. Ten to twelve thousand dollars in property was wealth and quite naturally it was multiplied by ten at the sewing bees.

Absorbed in locks and barrels, Elias somehow had missed out on being informed that Almena Harris was the town harlot. He knew that she had procured a divorce from Timothy Harris on a charge of "intolerable severity" and when she first began making advances to the gunsmith, his heart went out to her in sympathy. He had lived a lonely life, too, and wasn't in the habit of being elected a Don Juan. The courtship was brief and one-sided: shortly they were married—out of town, at her suggestion. Eyebrows were raised and the gun business slackened.

Within ten days after the marriage, the groom was at last properly informed by his unblushing bride that she intended "to quit sewing and take boarders," that he had been outwitted, they were lawfully married and he couldn't help himself. Elias was too proud and embarrassed to intimate to anyone how badly things had gone for him. He stood her slander as long as he could; then quietly closed up his local business and moved to Burlington. While his fortune rapidly diminished under her supervision, she refused to live with him and he refused to have her, until several years elapsed and "she became very anxious to move." "The reader may judge the cause of her anxiety, by referring to the affidavits respecting

her whoredom, and from the fact that within five or six months after I moved her to Burlington, she had a child, which lived two days; and who its father was, others may conjecture, but is unknown to me. Soon after she recovered her health, she became anxious to remove back to Middlebury. This was her continual cry, till March, 1815, when I returned with her to Middlebury. From that time, until our separation, it is impossible for the imagination to conceive, and much less for language to describe the fiend-like conduct of this woman."

After that he demanded a divorce on grounds of desertion and she countered with another on grounds of being "excluded from the house by bars and bolts."

The court cases that followed lasted for years. William Slade, Secretary of State, Clerk of the Supreme Court, Judge of the County Court (and later Governor of Vermont), insisted on taking her side and by a series of postponements, unethical refusal to hear witnesses, "by treachery, forgery, ill-gotten influence, misrepresentation and a cabalistic assistance" managed to have Elias jailed for refusal to pay alimony of \$750. During the years when the case was pending, Hall had been forced to dispose of his property and was penniless.

But the airing of the case in affidavits made the cheeks of the Deacons and Great Great Grandfather blush for what was going on in the pious community:

"I, Luke Patrick, of Rutland, Vermont, depose and say, that I lived with Nathan Bristol, next neighbour to Elias Hall, the latter part of the year 1812. . . . I was sent by Mrs. Bristol to the house of said Hall to borrow a large dish kettle; and I there saw James Satterlee in bed with Mrs.

Hall. . . . Satterlee says to me 'say not a word, but come over to my store and I will satisfy you.' Accordingly I went over, and he gave me a flag handkerchief, which I sold for one dollar and fifty cents. . . ."

"I, George B. Grosvenor, of Bridport, was living in the village of Middlebury most of the season of 1822, labouring at the carpenter's trade. . . . Having been acquainted with Almena late Mrs. Hall thirty years. . . . I went there on Sunday, to see if Mr. Hall had got home, as I knew of his absence. I knew there was no other family in the upper part of the house, and that they kept no boarders. . . . I went into the kitchen, did not find any one there, then into the south room, could see no one. But was satisfied some one would be in soon from the situation the house was in at this time. I went back into the kitchen, and heard somebody up stairs. I then went to the sink to get some water to drink, and while there, Mrs. Hall came down stairs with a man near her, whose name, or countenance I did not know; he had sandy hair. . . . I saw I was not wanted there and went away, with it fully impressed on my mind, from the circumstances, that their object in the chamber was of a criminal nature. . . .

"I further state, that when Mr. Hall was gone to Burlington, I heard her invite a man to call and see her, for she said her husband was gone; and in the evening, at about 10 or 11 o'clock, she again invited the same man to go with her, under pretence of taking care of some lime—they went out, but instead of going near the lime, she spoke to him, and said, 'come, we will go into the shop'—and turned and went into the shop, staid a while, then returned, and he stated that she had got what she wanted. . . ."

"I have also known him go out to his lot, two miles distant, in the morning, in ploughing, hoeing and mowing and frequently after it was dark come home, and meet with



nothing but frowns from his wife, and the most insulting and profane language; and then have to milk his own cow, and get his own supper of bread and milk before he had any thing to eat, although I never heard Mrs. Hall or any other person say that Mr. Hall did not provide well for his family. . . .”

Great Great Grandfather had occasionally been suspicious of the morals of some of his neighbors, and he continued to be.

Nor could anyone quite close his eyes to the undercover activity in the Hagar family. Half the family lived in Canada and the rest in Middlebury. Altogether there were a dozen of them. Divided in allegiance between Great Britain and the Colonies, they had moved to Montreal after the Revolution and didn't begin to filter back until 1812. Nobody questioned that a remunerative business of smuggling went on between the brothers that remained in Canada and those who made their homes in Vermont. Jonathan put up a handsome brick store on College Street, and had as good a line of merchandise as one could find in the county, but on imported goods one was never sure whether duty had been paid or whether they had been slipped down through Smugglers' Notch.

However, no questions about smuggling were raised when Jonathan brought into town a fresh breath of *Gai Paris* in the form of a chic French bride—done up in the latest continental finery and trying desperately to talk Yankee. The eyes of the College boys popped and the town matrons were agog. But oddly enough, “Lizzette” was so singularly charming and modest that she was accepted. Even the fact that she was a Catholic seemed not

to affect her prestige. There had been occasional foreigners in town but none quite of this caliber. Hagar family affairs were no longer their own. It became the secret of the town that Jonathan and Lizzette had agreed that all the boys in the family were to be Protestants like their father, the girls Catholics. There was little private peace when she was with child. In view of local spiritual loyalties there was no question about the sex preferred, but as the years went by the town population seemed to be going Roman; there were ten good Catholic daughters and only two Episcopal sons.

Ordinarily storekeepers were their own buyers and Jonathan's long and frequent trips to Boston and New York were forever trailed by a series of letters as charming as the writer:

"DEER SIR: I have received your letter which giv me good deal of pleasure to know that you war well and that you thot of me. I am verry sorry that you must do your business from home. I wish to see you verry much. I am verry lonesome. I enjoy a good health and so my children. It seems to me that you been gone a month. Your business goes on tolerable well. I have nothing new to write you. Your friends are all well here. I wish you would buy me a yard of red flannel for my baby. My deer do come as quick as possible for I be verry cold."

"Little Clary has been ill with a cold but is better and our friends and relatives in general good health. There is no news here and but little doing of anything. I have received two letters from you in which you say you are lonesome and consequently may consider my situation as being the same but it is Lent now and try to sleep all night as well as you can. . . ."

The moral guardianship of the cute little French wife had its effect. In time the idea of smuggling was completely abandoned and Jonathan mended his ways to become one of the most honest and respected citizens in Middlebury, treasurer of the county and treasurer even of the short-lived Middlebury Savings Bank.

Jonathan was a strong Episcopalian, in fact one of the founders of the Episcopalian Church, but whatever the religion—Episcopalian, Methodist, Baptist, or Congregational—everyone was more or less under the dominating influence of Thomas Merrill, pastor of the Congregational Church and the man who, because he indocinated the great majority of the townsfolk, was the greatest moral influence in the village. The Middlebury Congregationalists were the largest church body in the entire State and Dr. Merrill who served as their shepherd for almost half a century was respected accordingly.

The Reverend Merrill was a graduate of Dartmouth where he was a classmate and roommate of Daniel Webster. The two were leaders in rival societies at Dartmouth, and Thomas had the edge on Daniel. Much to the chagrin of the latter, it was Tom who took the valedictory honors in the class and Daniel never forgot it. Years later the Secretary of State wrote to the village pastor:

“At our time of life, the mind often turns to the past. I find that I think now much more frequently, than twenty or thirty years ago, of College scenes and College friends. I look over the catalogue, call to mind the dead, and inquire after the living. I well remember that I did not keep

up with you in the stated course of College exercises. Your lessons were better learned; and you were a great favorite with Prof. Smith, and the other members of the authority, from the exact punctuality of all your performances. I believe I was less industrious; at any rate I indulged more in general reading; and my attainments, if I made any, were not such as told for much in the recitation room. After leaving College, 'I caught up,' as the boys say, pretty well in Latin.—Would that I had pursued Greek, till I could read and understand Demosthenes in his own language.

"I shall always be happy to hear from you, and hope we may ere long meet again either on Otter Creek, or the Merrimac, or at Marshfield.

"Your old, attached and affectionate friend,

"Danl. Webster."

Thomas first came to Middlebury in 1804 as tutor at the College. He didn't particularly like the job, for that year a junior tutor had been dismissed unexpectedly and the newcomer had to take on a two-man load and conduct five classes daily, adding up to considerably more than thirty teaching hours a week. But the town recognized his talents as much as did the College. Plans for a new church building were at last in process of reaching maturity, and even though Thomas had made no particular point of studying theology at Dartmouth he was persuaded to pass up teaching and turn pastor.

Merrill had the perfect ministerial stance as well as the mental makeup—a full six feet tall, robust, erect, and sufficiently ungraceful in movement to look the ideal pastor. He was unimaginative, intellectual, and as an orator, dull. His convictions were those of Jonathan Edwards and John Calvin and since he hadn't been ex-

posed to too much theological controversy he avoided "speculative conjecture" and devoted himself strictly to the letter of the Bible, "to legitimate reasonings therefrom, to the facts and importance of religious experience, and the inculcation of the duties and graces of the Gospel."

But Pastor Merrill's services were not limited to preaching and calling. His parish literally extended the length and breadth of Vermont. Everlastingly he was being called "to sit in counsel to ordain ministers and to settle difficulties in churches." He started a strong temperance movement in the county, was a founder of the Domestic Missionary and Tract Societies, edited *The Adviser, or Vermont Evangelical Magazine*, and attended every meeting of the General Convention of Congregational Ministers for fifty years as Register and frequently Moderator. His hobbies were rewriting the New England Primer as a children's catechism, prevention of international wars, and raising grapes. He agreed with Voltaire on the spiritual value of raising things, but instead of reciting his thesis simply as Candide did: "We must cultivate our gardens," Thomas Merrill gave it the New England turn: "If people would become better acquainted with nature, they would know much more about God."

To keep up with his self-inflicted schedule, he never allowed himself more than seven hours of sleep, rose daily at five o'clock to labor in his study, insisted on keeping Saturday afternoons free of visitors so that he could labor on his Sabbath sermon and urged his con-

gregation to schedule funerals in the afternoon so that he would be uninterrupted from nine until noon.

Great Great Grandfather witnessed most of the twelve hundred conversions by his pastor and agreed with the Reverend Goodhue of Shoreham: "We may have had better writers of sermons; more graceful, more eloquent preachers; men of greater and more varied learning; of nicer criticism and taste; more deeply and thoroughly studied in metaphysical discussions; but where among those whose names stand enrolled on our records, shall we find one, of greater energy of purpose, of more purity of intention, of more candor, of sounder judgment, of stronger reasoning powers and greater ability to influence other minds?"

In addition to all his literary and religious efforts Merrill always expected to write the annals of the town. He made copious notes for the work, but in the end there wasn't time. He had to pass the task on to his friend, Samuel Swift, who probably did it better than Merrill would have. Merrill had lived "long enough to see a whole generation buried and to train up another to supply their place," but Swift saw the same generation trained and buried, so as historian he was equally well qualified. They shared the same disqualification of living too near their subjects to give an entirely impartial analysis, for the historian felt it his duty generously to sift out anything that would be derogatory to his town or his fellow townsman. Over a long period of years while serving as College tutor, Governor's secretary, town representative, Judge of Probate, College Trustee,

and editor of the *Vermont Mirror*, he assembled odds and ends of town history and finally pressed them into his book.

Although most of the real genius among Great Great Grandfather's acquaintances was directed toward letters and laws there were practical men of industry too—often self-made like their more cultured neighbors. A good example was Eben Judd who worked out the scheme for sawing marble by water power and built up a sizable Middlebury industry. On a little side alley next to the Creek the marble mill thundered above the roar of the falls for over thirty years.

Judd had discovered the first Vermont marble in the bank of the Creek "just below the bridge" in 1804 and its rare qualities were at once described to the world as the finest on this side of the Atlantic. There were white marble, "dove-colored" marble, and elegantly variegated marble of "a finer texture than any other in the United States."

Two years after the discovery Judd had a 999-year lease from Appleton Foot of the right to dig marble on any part of his lot and a two-story mill operating sixty saws. It was a big, clamorous, cold, dirty, and unhealthy building, commanded by innumerable gawky arms reaching from overhead shafts to the saws patiently eating away at the stone below. Judd had probably seen the general mechanics for sawing marble with sand and soft iron bands before he came to Vermont. Nobody ever found out the whole truth of it, but the best conjecture was that he explained the general idea of the operation to a juvenile genius, Isaac Markham—aged ten

—who made a table model for the fun of it and then the elder had his factory machinery built from the pattern.

By 1820 the business had increased to such an extent that he took on his son-in-law Lebbeus Harris as partner. Together they established agencies throughout New England and western New York and took orders for anything from tombstones to sinks. Transportation, of course, was his major difficulty. Everything had to be teamed to Lake Champlain for shipment and his troubles frequently did not end there: "I have time to tell but a short story," Lebbeus once wrote to his partner. "I went yesterday to Johnson's place to find the boat, and returned this morning. The boat is here . . . but Johnson's brother will not take the stone. I have spent the whole of this afternoon and evening to induce him to take them on board. It is useless to say more to him . . . he says he shall not wait after the wind is favourable. If your written contract is not completed perhaps it had better be done before Johnson knows that the boat is here. The blocks are good shape and from one tun to three and a few perhaps  $3\frac{1}{2}$  tuns, but generally about three tuns, and about 8 feet long. The Capt. is quite sure that one block will brake down the deck of his boat with 3 tier of props under the deck and 2 or 3 thicknesses of plank and boards on top—The Capt. of the boat is easily frightened—(a small man). The boat is new and has run only about 4 months and is a stout boat. All the arguments I am master of will not induce him to take his boat to load."

Like every other town, Great Great Grandfather's had its share of people with manias—people who took



their religion too severely or not at all, people who would have been in asylums under different circumstances, and just plain eccentrics. Samuel Bartholomew belonged to the latter class. Sam had an aversion to shoes, sour apples, and prose. He poured forth the emotions of his soul in faltering rhyme, planted an orchard of sweetings, and went barefoot from spring thaw to first snowfall. Known over the county as "The Apple Man," he invited the youngsters of the town seasonally to his groves to munch Shepherd's Sweetings and listen to his rhymed philosophy. On Sunday morning the Apple Man came padding into town, carrying a shoe in each hand and whispering poetry to the birds. Outside of church, he would pause and gruntingly ease on his shoes before entering. The only example of his versification that ever got into print commemorated a community housewarming at Gamaliel Painter's on Christmas day in 1802:

"This place, called Middlebury Falls  
Is like a city without walls.  
Surrounded 'tis by hemlock trees  
Which shut out all its enemies.  
The powwow now on Christmas day,  
Which much resembled Indian play,  
I think will never be forgotten  
Till all the hemlock trees are rotten."

Great Great Grandfather knew every villager from the apprentices in Hagar's store to the College professors. Knowing other people and their affairs was his social bread and butter. There were all kinds of people

among the neighbors, but few dull ones. The dullness that comes of small-town stagnation hadn't set in. Things were growing. Hope was in the air. Life was colored by an enthusiasm for the future which would be of their own building.

There were important men in the neighborhood like Horatio Seymour—quiet, humble, unassuming in his importance. The fact that he counted national figures of the stature of Clay, Adams, and Webster among his personal friends apparently meant little more than counting Great Great Grandfather. Yale thought enough of him to give him an honorary LL.D. and Vermont thought highly enough of him to elect him United States Senator for two terms.

There were hard-working philanthropists like Seth Storrs, the perfect Christian gentleman, who made money serving as lawyer and State's Attorney and, as soon as he had accumulated his bit, returned it to the town in the form of a campus for the Academy and College.

There were distinguished men of affairs like John Willard, who climbed the democratic ladder from farm laboring and seamanship to a controlling position in the Republican party—even though his profession was medicine. To all his other interests he had added a directorship of the Vermont State Bank at Middlebury and his contributions to education through his wife Emma Hart can never be adequately appraised.

There was a fence around the College campus, but it was not designed to draw any social line between town and gown. The College professors were Great Great

Grandfather's neighbors as much as were the shopkeepers, the lawyers, the factory hands, and the apprentices. Anyone connected with teaching or college administration was in a class with ministers and missionaries. Every housewife knew that the president and professors were getting barely a living wage and her charity among them was liberal. The extra pies, hams, and pumpkins went to the minister and the professors. Sometimes there was impatience over the antics of the College lads but the townsfolk were all the more unsparing in their pity of the professor on account of the antics.

Relatively few of Great Great Grandfather's neighbors could boast of formal education; however, there was no question that culture ruled the town. Contacts with the educated, with merchants who could read Latin and with lawyers who read the Bible gave a tone to Middlebury and a lift even to Great Great Grandmother's gossip.

.



## THEIR POLITICS

**T**HE first town meeting Great Great Grandfather attended was in Daniel Foot's parlor. Daniel knew the price of democracy as well as any Middleburian. He was one of the earliest pioneers to blaze a trail into Addison County wilderness, determined to find footing where British tyranny could be kept under control. By 1776 he had discovered there was no such escape. Forewarned of a British assault, the family hastily buried everything salvageable from soap to highboys, and made their getaway—south. Daniel remained long enough to see his cattle rounded up for an enemy field kitchen and his house go up in smoke. It took only a few such examples of British cussedness for one to set a high figure on the value of liberty. Unsoured by the War, he returned as soon as hostilities ceased, rebuilt his house, and

with the help of five husky sons constructed a bridge over the falls and one of the first grist and sawmills.

Foot was a thoroughly public-spirited fellow, ingenious, obstinate, and with his investment of energy already sunk in Middlebury, he felt that it was his turn to reap some of the dividends. Foot's place, according to Daniel, was the only desirable center for the town—even though it was three miles from the falls; the field next to his house was an ideal site for a village green, a church, school, and town hall. To secure his future plans for the town, he built an oversized parlor to accommodate the political meetings and an oversized barn to serve temporarily as a church. If these meetings were held there long enough, he figured, something like the doctrine of adverse possession ought to apply after a time. Unsuspecting, the townsfolk accepted his magnanimous hospitality.

These town meetings which overflowed the Foot house were no overweening examples of parliamentary art. The setting didn't lean to pretension. Great Great Grandfather's first glimpse of the workings of democracy was a little disappointing. Town meeting was an afternoon affair that lasted for hours. The first two hours were taken up with getting organized: electing a moderator, a clerk, three selectmen, a constable, a treasurer. Then three listers had to be balloted on, a collector of town rates, a leather sealer, and a sealer of weights and measures, three grand jurymen, six "pettit jurors," and nine surveyors of highways. There had to be a pound keeper, two tithing men, three fence viewers, and special committees on bridges and schools. It was democ-

racy working at its slowest, but there was not one gentleman in the gathering who wasn't convinced that popular government was better even than good government. The offices had to be spread among as many citizens as possible, and the qualification of each weighed with embarrassing frankness.

Take the pound keeper. He had to be centrally located so that his pound was readily accessible to anyone who picked up a stray animal. His integrity had to be inviolable, for in every community there were scoundrels ready to turn an animal loose for the sake of collecting the fee for its return. And he had to be literate in order to help draft public notices of his finds:

"Taken up a brown horse, shod all round with three white feet and a star on his forehead and a white snip over the left nostril and a long thick mane."

"Taken up a stray mare with three white feet, white face and nose, two white eyes. Shod before. About ten or twelve years old. Natural to trot and prance."

The fence viewers likewise had to be men of judicial awareness. Periodically they had to go the rounds of barriers to make sure that the stumps and rails were strong or thick enough to offer restraint to an ornery cow or vicious ram.

The political job calling for the most astute knowledge of law, order, and human nature was, of course, that of the town clerk. He was counselor and confidant on all affairs that pertained to prudence and jurisprudence, ready to assist in preparing a complicated title-deed or in helping a neglected husband satisfy the law in phrasing an elopement notice for the papers.

"Whereas Fanny my dear wife hath eloped from my bed and board,—these are therefore to forbid all persons harboring or trusting her on my account, as I will pay no debt of her contracting, after this date."

"The serpent has beguiled my Eve.—She hath taken forbidden fruit and fled from the garden, and quitted my bed and board. Her conduct in this was very singular, and without provocation or known cause—this is to forbid all persons harboring my Dolly Louis."

The character, endurance, and impartiality of nominees for the office of tithing men had to be given long and weighty consideration. Even the Sabbath police had friends whose church naps they would be willing to overlook. And if they were not alert in patrolling the streets on Sunday, it was more than likely that someone would steal an illegal stroll, unnecessarily chop a few sticks of wood, or hoe a weedy strip of garden.

The selection of these town officers was taken in dead earnestness. There were long over-the-fence debates before the meeting and longer disputes over qualifications during the meeting. The March sun was throwing slant rays over the assembly and the plank seats were getting uncomfortably hard by the time new business was ready for discussion.

Great Great Grandfather, considerate, game, and a little bored, sat through the endless hours of town debate that would eventually wind up with tangible legislation written illegibly in the clerk's books:

"Voted not to let sheep to run at large in the highways out of the owners enclosures.

"Voted that if any ram shall be found running at large

at any time between the first of September and the fifteenth day of November is to be forfeit to any person who shall take up said ram.

"Voted that Jabez Rogers is to have the improvement of eight feet in front of his house and lot for a dore yard.

"Voted to allow Imri Smalley five dollars for keeping a strange girl.

"Voted that the several surveyors of highways be authorized in their discretion to procure scrapers for the district in which they are severally surveyors. . . .

"Voted that the selectmen and civil authority of the town of Middlebury be and they hereby are authorized to permit inoculation for the smallpox in the town under such regulations and restrictions as they may judge prudent and prohibit it at their discretion.

"Voted to lay a tax of five mills on a dollar on the list . . . to defray the expense of erecting guide posts and other town charges.

"Voted to take any measures thought proper to remove the flood wood on the head of the Middlebury falls and to appoint an agent or agents to remove said flood wood and other obstructions on said falls and to commence any suit or suits against any person or persons for obstructing the water of said falls.

"Voted to give Mr. Roswell Shirtliff a call to settle as minister of the gospel. Voted that we will give the said Shirtliff five hundred dollars annually for his services as a minister."

Church and town were one; town meetings were church business meetings during Great Great Grandfather's youth and whenever a dozen citizens felt the gospel urge to talk over the degenerate state of religious life, they merely had to present their petition to the town clerk, and he was required to circulate the warn-



ing: "Whereas application has been made by more than seven of the Inhabitants and Freeholders of the town of Middlebury to warn a meeting of the inhabitants of said town to try their minds with regard to hiring the Reverend Mr. Pamerle to preach in said town on probation or otherwise—these are therefore to warn all the Inhabitants of said town to meet at the Dwelling house of Mr. Daniel Foot in said town on Friday the fifth day of February next at one o'clock in the afternoon for the purposes above mentioned."

It was the legal duty of the town to assume religious authority until 1807 and ecclesiastic details were winnowed publicly along with details of highways, cemeteries, taxes, paupers, schools, and smallpox. The town, rather than a secular church group, had to "fix on a place to set the meeting house," to weigh the propriety of building "without expense to the town at large," to decide what to do about the pastor "who is uneasy in his present situation," to reconsider former votes for "building the meeting house where the stakes were pitched," to "treat" with a pastor and "agree with him on some certain price at which he shall receive grain in payment on his salary," to determine whether church expenses should be taken care of in taxes or "the public sale of pews."

Once town and church were divorced—as far as official proceedings went—there seemed to be more time for consideration of the refinements of *this* life. Roads and bridges headed the list. With mountain streams pouring down from the hills in all directions, and a layer of sticky clay everywhere to keep moisture

from disappearing into subsoil, stream crossings and street surfaces gave the "surveyors of highways" sleepless nights and sweaty days. At one town meeting alone in 1809 they were given the assignment of rebuilding and repairing nine bridges, with a working fund of \$537. (This included entire reconstruction of a new two hundred foot bridge, eighteen feet wide, at a cost of \$168.) And the pay allowed by the town freeholders could offer little encouragement, a dollar and ten cents for a ten-hour day or seventy-five cents for eight hours. Private turnpike companies fortunately lightened the labors of the surveyors, though everyone knew the companies were losing money.

The town meeting had to serve as a committee of the whole on zoning and town improvement. Cattle and nature did what landscaping there was along the highways; efforts to beautify the town were limited pretty much to work on the commons and this was a case of keeping the brush rather than the grass trimmed. One of the purposes of the meeting of 1808 was "to see whether the town will give . . . liberty to clear the commons west of the courthouse of board timber and to rail in the same and ornament it with trees. . . ." Great Great Grandfather voted with the rest "that a committee be authorized to set out such number of shade trees as they think proper on said commons and on such part of the highway as may not obstruct the public travil, and inclose said trees with a railing sufficient to protect said trees, but not in such manner as to obstruct foot travillors from passing across said common." After the timber had been cut, the trees planted and the fence

built, a group of business men got together and decided the area would make first class building property. It made a livelier town meeting than most, but in the end the majority voted "to let the common still continue to be a common."

Vermont offered a very unfavorable climate to paupers, but the Middlebury town poormaster was as kind as the treasury allowed. Ordinarily a home of some sort, poorfarm, poorhouse, or workhouse, gave shelter to the old and infirm, though at least once the town stooped to the practice of auctioning off the paupers to the most persistent bidders—striking them off "to the person or persons who will keep them at the lowest price." Widow Frank was "bid off by Martin Evert to be kept for a year at one dollar ninety-nine cents a week," and Thomas Clark to Joshua Hyde "for three months at one dollar a week." By 1839 the paupers were well enough off so that the poorhouse was "duly established as a house of correction . . ." for the punishment of idle and disorderly persons. The poormaster became a "keeper," charged with "employing them in labor during the period of correction to which sentenced" and empowered to restrain them "by shackles and fetters" at his discretion.

Oddly enough, the principal educational concern of town assemblies was not the curriculum or the quality of teaching but the location of schools. Time and time again the districting of schools had to be adjusted to suit chore time and family walking habits, and everlastingly the families in all the districts were complaining that their youngsters had to walk too far. Finally in

1822 the conflict was temporarily unscrambled; precise bounds for seven districts were drawn up in a document reminiscent of *The Gold Bug*. District six was representative: "The following territory, to wit, beginning at the mile bridge, so called, on the bank of Otter Creek, thence eastwardly on the north line of district No. 3 to the northwest corner of Philip Foot's farm, thence east to the road, thence north to the north line of Josiah Stowell's home farm, thence westwardly to the southeastern corner of Robert Hurtan's farm, thence west on said Hurtan's south line to the southwest corner, thence on his west line to the north line of the farm formerly owned by Eleager Conant, deceased, thence west on the north line of said farm to the bottom of the hill, thence north to the north line of Hastings Warren's farm, thence on his north line and in that direction to Otter Creek, thence up said creek to the place of beginning, shall be one School district and known by the name of School District No. Six."

Either the children got lost trying to find their respective districts, or parents were so impressed that their complaints were stilled. In any case Great Great Grandfather's children trudged uncomplainingly to the cross-roads school thereafter.

Prohibition didn't begin to lubricate town politics until well into the third decade of the century. It was then that John Hough, erudite professor of Greek, Latin, Theology, Rhetoric, and English Literature, rose unexpectedly in town meeting and gave such an address on the evils of liquor as few freeholders in any town ever had the privilege of hearing. The address ended

with a sententious classic resolution, "to wit—whereas the traffic in spirituous liquor presents temptations and furnishes facilities for forming intemperate appetites and habits, and as accessory before the fact, is chargeable with a participation in the guilt of intemperance, as it is undeniably chargeable with a participation in the mischief multiplied and grievous as they are; and whereas no municipal and legislative authority has any right to license sin, thus giving it the sanction of law, Resolved as the decided opinion and the earnest wish of this meeting that the Selectmen and Local Authority of the town decline recommending any individual to the County Court for license to vend ardent spirits and that the Court decline granting license to anyone for that purpose."

Thanks to his eloquence the resolution was adopted almost unanimously. But Professor Hough had started something: he had thrown a political ball that was to be tossed back and forth among town factions for a century.

Full trust was given the town treasurer in handling the finances; he rarely had to expose his books to public questioning. The 1812 report was a fair example: "The treasurer of the town of Middlebury makes the following report that there is a note in the treasury against Abel Case for the sum of seventeen dollars and nine cents being a balance of a tax granted in November 1805. Also according to the Books there stands against Jonathan M. Young a balance of sixty-eight dollars and seventeen cents on a tax granted by the Town in Sep-

tember 1808. Likewise that there is no money in the treasury."

Daniel Foot was a good politician, but he could offer no match for the political contriving of Gamaliel Painter, who owned as much real estate at the falls as Daniel did at the foot of the mountains. Gamaliel won out in the argument over the center for the town and after the early assemblies in Foot's parlor the town meeting moved to town for good. Great Great Grandfather attended official town gatherings in a few other private homes and at the hotel; but as soon as the Courthouse was built, its great hall became the capitol, rather cold and formal after the familiar meetings in crowded rooms, but at least giving a dress of dignity to Middlebury democracy.

Shortly after the town was organized, efforts at making Great Great Grandfather toe the legal mark were doubled and duplicated when the village was granted borough incorporation and the citizens went into an orgy of village lawmaking superimposed on town ordinance. There had to be a rule for everything, "Such in particular as relate to public markets: relative to streets, alleys, public highways and commons, cleaning, repairing and improving the same;—relative to slaughter houses, and nuisances generally;—relative to a watch and lighting the streets of said Borough;—relative to the restraining from running at large in said Borough, any geese, sheep, hogs or any other creature;—relative to the refusal of any member of said Corporation to serve in

any office, to which he may be elected;—relative to the erecting and regulating hay scales;—relative to a fire company, and every thing, which relates to the prevention and extinguishment of fire; and generally which may relate to the improvement and police of said Borough. *Provided*, That no such bye laws shall extend to the regulating the price of any article whatever, except the article of bread, which may be offered for sale.”

There were commands and statutes as intricate as those in the Pentateuch and couched in much the same Hebraic lingo.

“It is hereby ordained, That every owner or possessor of any cow or cows, or oxen, or other creature of the neat cattle kind, shall during the night season keep every such creature in his possession, within a field, yard or other enclosure in such manner as to afford a reasonable security against the escape, or going at large of such creature, or creatures.”

“And it is hereby further ordained, That no creature of the horse kind, and no sheep or swine shall be suffered to run at large, or lie on the common, or highways. . . .”

“And it is hereby further ordained, That all geese, ducks and dunghill fowls within said Burrough shall, by the owner or possessor thereof be kept within his own enclosure. And if any goose, duck or dunghill fowl shall be found out of the inclosure of the owner or possessor thereof, such goose, duck or dunghill fowl shall be forfeit to any one, who will kill the same before its return into the inclosure or possession of the owner thereof.”

A few serious fires in the village had served public notice that this menace was not to be slighted. The terror of fire was even greater than the terror of dictator-

ship. As soon as a blaze threatened, everyone became subject to the martial law of the fire wardens. From none of their commands could there be appeal or redress.

“ . . . it shall be the duty of the fire wardens to examine and inspect, from time to time, as they may judge necessary or proper, at least in the first week of every second month . . . all the houses, stores and shops, and all other buildings . . . in which fire shall be kept. And if either of said fire wardens shall judge any house, store or shop, to be exposed to fire by defect of any chimney, hearth, stove or stove pipe, or other defect, shall immediately give notice thereof in writing to the owner or possessor of such building. . . .

“In case fire shall break out in any building . . . the said fire wardens or either of them shall have power to demand and require the assistance of any of the inhabitants . . . to extinguish and prevent the spreading of such fire, and to remove goods and effects out of any houses or places . . . to pull down, blow up, or remove any house or building, provided that it shall be thought necessary by a major part of the fire wardens. . . . And the said fire wardens are hereby further empowered to suppress with force, if necessary, all tumults and disorders. . . .

“Every owner or possessor of any dwelling house, store or shop . . . shall . . . provide and keep constantly in repair one ladder, on which to ascend to the roof of such house, store or shop, and also one other ladder with iron hooks, or in some other way so prepared as that in case of fire, it can be immediately so placed on the roof of such house, store or shop, as that persons may conveniently ascend to the ridge thereof. . . .

“Every owner, or possessor of a house, store or shop more than one story high, shall at his, her or their expense, provide and keep in constant repair, two buckets containing ten quarts each, made of leather or wood, well painted



with the initials of the owners name on the outside, and also numbered, and kept in such part of the house, store or shop, as the fire wardens shall direct. . . .”

To make sure that there were no usurpers in this authoritarian system the fire wardens were furnished with long, brilliantly colored staffs which they were required to carry as badge of office while on duty. If a fireman suddenly lost his grip on the pole in the confusion of handling ladders, hooks, buckets, and explosives he became instantly as powerless as any urchin in the throng: “No warden shall exercise or have any power as such unless he carries with him at a time of fire the badge of his office.”

From fire the village laws extended to Saturday night baths. Modesty took priority over sanitation. Not until long after dark of a sultry August hay-day were Great Great Grandfather’s kids permitted to take a plunge in the Creek “between the south line of Solomon S. Miller’s land above the falls, and the line between Eben W. Judd and Asa Mores’ land below the falls.” And from children the cautious eye of the law extended to pets:

“Any owner or possessor of any dog or bitch shall keep the same dog or bitch restrained and shall not suffer such dog or bitch to run at large . . . if any owner or possessor of any dog or bitch shall not keep said dog or bitch restrained and shall suffer said dog or bitch to run at large off of the premise of said owner or possessor . . . such owner or possessor shall forfeit and pay the sum of one dollar. . . . Any person who . . . shall become the owner or possessor of any dog or bitch shall leave his name and a

description of the dog or bitch of which he is the owner or possessor with the Treasurer . . . and shall pay said sum of one dollar. . . . Such person shall not be liable to any prosecution for suffering said dog or bitch to run at large within one year. . . . The Treasurer of said village shall provide himself with a book . . . and shall keep in said book a list of the names of all persons who shall leave their names as the owner or possessor of any dog or bitch and a description of said dog or bitch. . . . All monies . . . collected . . . for breaches of the provision of this bye law shall be expended . . . in the construction and improvement of the side walk in said village."

Few Middlebury sidewalks were improved on the strength of the dog-and-bitch law. The dog-and-bitch law was very unpopular, the bucket and ladder laws were unpopular, the geese and cow laws failed of enforcement, innumerable laws on roads, taxes, alleys, nuisances, assessments, and hay scales were too much like existing town regulations, and the Otter Creek bathing law served principally to encourage sneak swims on humid afternoons. The first village organization ran a short course and died of its own weight.

No government—village or national—was above criticism in this small-town political order. The freeholders took their politics as seriously as they took their religion. They participated in state and national elections with the same eagerness with which they elected a borough bailiff. "The Freemen of the town of Middlebury are hereby warned to meet at the Courthouse in said Middlebury on the first Tuesday of September next at one o'clock in the afternoon for the purpose of choosing a Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Treasurer of the State,

Twelve Councillors and a Representative to represent the town of Middlebury in the General Assembly for the year ensuing." All eligible citizens heeded this warning as if they themselves were individually responsible for "choosing a Governor." Democracy was a duty as well as a name. The Warning was a *warning*—against the evil day of tyranny.

The Middlebury newspaper was the spokesman for politics beyond the town borders and about three-quarters of the column space was ordinarily devoted to political affairs: full day by day accounts of what went on in Washington during congressional sessions (ten days or two weeks late), inaugural addresses in their entirety, major political speeches from every part of the country, lengthy debates and oratory over proposed amendments to the Constitution, columns of handset type on impeachment cases. Every new law that came before Congress was to be a Middlebury law, directly affecting the lives and future of a Vermont farmer, blacksmith, or merchant; and the pros and cons were accordingly to be aired in detail before it went into effect.

Individual rights and privileges to which Great Great Grandfather was entitled had been made relatively clear in the new United States Constitution, yet that Constitution was open to trial and interpretation. Outlanders like those who had settled Middlebury were escapists from Authority; Great Great Grandfather was not only suspicious of monarchy, aristocracy, oligarchy, he was suspicious of GOVERNMENT—any Government in which he could not participate. He wanted to have a

hand in what ruling was to be done. No one questioned papa's sovereignty with the home rod, but authority from that point all the way to Philadelphia and Washington was very much in question. He insisted on having his say in defining American democracy.

When a speech was addressed to Thomas Jefferson in the State General Assembly, the Middlebury *Mercury* published it:

"... May the General Government draw around the whole nation such lines of defense as shall prove forever impassable to every foreign foe. May it secure to the several states, as well the reality as the form of a republican government. May it ever respect those governments as the most 'competent for our domestic concerns; cherish them as the surest bulwarks against anti-republican tendencies'; and effectually protect them against any possible encroachments on each other. May it effectually extend to us, and to every individual of our fellow citizens, all that protection to which the state governments may be found incompetent. . . ."

And Jefferson replied in a letter to Vermonters:

"To draw around the whole nation the strength of the General Government as a barrier against foreign foes, to watch the borders of every State, that no external hand may intrude or disturb the exercise of self-government reserved to itself, to equalize and moderate the public contribution. . . . These are functions of the General Government on which you have a right to call. They are in unison with those principles which have met the approbation of the Representatives of Vermont. . . ."

Such chats with the President established confidence,

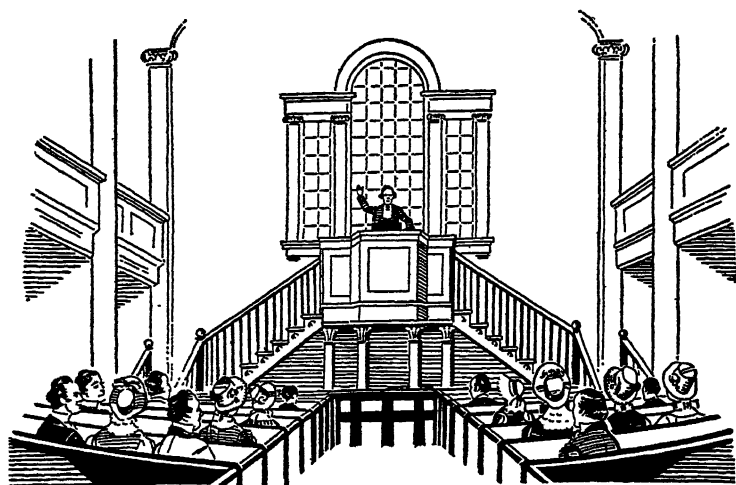
gave even national government a personal flavor, and the democratic idea was given constant reiteration in the press. Excerpts from books, pamphlets, and sermons, tucked into editorials, used as filler, or spread ominously over a whole page, helped with the indoctrination. All sides and views were aired. When party journals began recommending that government purse strings be loosened to accommodate a spoils system, the Middlebury press let go a powerful broadside:

“Here we have the plan laid for a complete aristocracy. Let the people look to it! Let them impart this power to their Chief Magistrate, let this fabric of corruption be completed, and their President is a KING. For what more would be amenable to no power—his will would be the law; for his will alone would be its execution. With the offices of the government entirely at his disposal, to squander upon parasites, or to set up at auction; to bestow at pleasure, or to traffic for power,—what plan of corruption might not be carried into effect, if contrived by profligate cunning, and managed by base-hearted intrigue, craft and hypocrisy! Let the people look to it. If ever their liberties are overturned, the event will not be brought about by foreign force, for, with our natural advantages for defence, our millions of freemen never can be conquered; but it will be done by some sly usurper, some smiling traitor, who will begin, first by exciting their jealousies, in smooth, soft whispers. . . .”

Solicitude for government of the people, by the people, for the people was fresh in Great Great Grandfather's mind. Free government was a new issue, a live issue, and he intended to keep it so. The rights his fellow citizens had struggled for were to be preserved and

jealously guarded. He expected to continue to see, through trial and error, better adaptations of the democratic ideal and it was not his intention ever to let an American government—his government—reach a period of sluggishness. The inventive, creative spirit was part and parcel of democracy—indifference spelled its downfall.

Nor was his idea of political government theoretical and visionary. He weighed projected laws as they would apply to him and let his own decisions mature before he cared to express his opinion by ballot. He cherished the pageantry of government, such as the general assembly that met at the Middlebury Courthouse in 1806 with a grand procession of the military, sheriffs from all the surrounding counties, the Governor and the Council, the members of the house, the clergy and State dignitaries—but it was not parade for the sake of parade that he enjoyed. He knew what it stood for and he got an honest thrill out of seeing his personal representatives of government, men whose biographies he knew, men for whom he had voted and who now in turn were to vote on larger issues for him. He was a king in a whole new country of kings.



## *THEIR RELIGION*

**A** NNA WEEKS was on Great Great Grandmother's doorstep, weeping for the seventh time over the same lines in the same letter from her daughter-in-law across the Lake. There was no such thing as private correspondence in Middlebury. Everyone knew everyone else's friends and relatives, and when a letter arrived it was common property. Anna had hitched up the chaise as soon as the letter came and started making the rounds of the village. Her seventh private reading and sniffing was at Great Great Grandmother's: ". . . very much discouraged in the fall about ever getting a living here—such a huge wild colony to subdue, our boys so young, their Dadda so old and infirm, but I find that our bountiful Creator has ways and means to provide us that we little think of. I hope I shall not be too much

66

concerned about the things of this world any more. . . . The Lord has raised us friends here in the wilderness when we were sick. . . . Deacon Platt seems to be a very pious man. He lives a mile off. We have not had any meeting since Christmas, and I don't suppose we shall till warm weather. We have let our horse to go to Connecticut and we hope to have three or four dollars in money for the use of him. . . . We can raise flax—alas how is the scene changed. We had eleven in our family in hurry and noise, now but seven. . . . We have none to disturb us in our devotions. . . . We sing a Psalm every morning before Prayers and the children all join but Jewett. . . .”

Great Great Grandmother added a sympathetic whimper to Anna's at the mention of Jewett—hardly more than a baby. All the Weekses' tribulations brought back her first years in Middlebury. She could see her own children around the log cabin fireplace, before the big house was built, trying to keep up with their father in singing Greenfield and Bridgewater at family prayers.

“Woods make people love one another and kind and obliging and good-natured,” she told Anna.

“Woods make us set more by the Almighty,” Anna added.

Great Great Grandmother had brought her devoutness with her from Connecticut; picking berries or visiting on the Sabbath were to her misdemeanors akin to horse thievery. The table diet might be reduced to a handful of parched corn, but Great Great Grandfather's grace was not shortened. The furniture might consist of



half a dozen homemade benches pulled close to the hearth, but they served family devotions as well as the best pew in a church. From them the Bible had been read night and morning: the trials of the children of Israel, the commands of Moses, Christ, and St. Paul. The one-room log cabin could in a moment's notice be converted from a creamery or carpenter's shop into a chapel where familiar tunes were intoned recitativo, and humble petition lifted to God. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Prayers began and ended the day. No matter how pressing the farm work was, no matter who came to call, the family altar was not to be dispensed with. Great Great Grandfather's prayers were homely and intimate. They started with great sweeping generalities affecting mankind, the nation and State, and worked down to the weather, the condition of the larder, Aunt Lydia's toothache, and the missing calf. If the very hairs of our heads are numbered, surely God was interested in Lydia's jaw and the lost heifer.

For the most part, this homemade religion was one of fear—fear of not being worthy of heaven, fear of God, fear of the devil, fear of hell. Tortures in the life hereafter were painted on the imagination of Great Great Grandfather's children before they were able to question or ask questions. Physical and mental suffering was already very much of a reality to both old and young. Just about every mode of torment was familiar to them: heat, cold, hunger, solitude, overwork, disease. It took no great play of imagination to develop more excruciating forms of pain—and they could all be counted on in

their idea of hell. "Come to go to bed," one of the neighbors had confessed, "the fear of awakeing up in Hell would frighten me so that I dare not go to sleep, and pray in my way and promise amendment till I would finally drop to sleep and know no more till I woke up in the morning and see the light. The first thought would be praise to God that he had kept me out of Hell another night. . . ."

Great Great Grandfather had little sympathy for the way community religion had gone during the 1790's. He wanted a church and everyone else apparently wanted a church, but Christianity showed up at its worst when it came to agreement on where the church was to be located. The town had been settled at three distinct points of a geodetic triangle, each about three miles apart, and the pietists respectively representing this trio of communities within a community were all stubbornly determined that their locality be favored with a church spire.

State law authorized that whenever twenty-five or more inhabitants of a parish "being of similar sect and denomination of Christians, shall think themselves able to build a meeting house," a town meeting should be called, a pastor agreed upon, and taxes fixed to defray the expenses of building and salary. Everything would have run off smoothly if the original Connecticut proprietors hadn't been so forehanded in establishing the spot in the dead center of the town, before they had seen the terrain. The geographic center turned out to be a swamp which one could hardly wade into, much less drain for construction of a meetinghouse. The State

fathers had arranged for no legislation to take care of such an impasse, so Great Great Grandfather year after year attended town meetings which inevitably turned into religious squabbles.

At least a dozen times he raised his hand to vote affirmatively on a motion: "to fix on a proper place to build a meeting house and fix on a green," "to adopt some measures to build a house for public worship," "to choose a committee . . . to fix on a spot for a meeting house and see on what terms it may be obtained," "to choose a committee to stick a stake for the meeting house and pitch on a place or places to bury the dead." The committees met and wrangled, met again and deadlocked. Meantime Great Great Grandfather regularly hitched up his horses on Sabbath mornings and took his family to Daniel Foot's house, to Daniel Foot's barn, to Ebenezer Sumner's barn. There in an essence of stable and new mown timothy they listened to the word of God as expounded by a transient pastor and filled the rafters with their dissonant psalms, while chaff sifted down on their heads from the scaffolding and a bored cow bellowed a punctuation mark into the Bible text. For a time the Congregationalists moved into Mattock's tavern where the deacons had ready access to liquid refreshment during intermissions; and as soon as the Courthouse was completed in 1798, it was turned to the purpose of Sabbath worship.

Two personalities most deeply involved in the squabble over permanent church location were Daniel Foot and Gamaliel Painter. Foot, who had wanted the political as well as the religious center of the town in his pas-

ture at the foot of the mountain, was put down by an uncharitable visiting clergyman as "a high tempered, boastful man, conceited; vulgar and highly inelegant in ye house." Painter offered the antithesis, as cunning a stumper for a man like Foot as a town the size of Middlebury could provide, aggravating in his slow, labored speech, a sly politician, stubborn in his belief that his interpretation of foresight was correct. It usually took time, but in the end Gamaliel had his way. He wanted the church at the north end of Main Street and by hook and probably a little crookedness he finally got it there—after two decades of mounting argument.

Architecturally the delay was well worth while. Painter in his own good time found Lavius Fillmore, a student of the work of Sir Christopher Wren, to serve as architect. Circular pews, high pulpit, groined arches, graceful Ionic columns, and a spire very nearly as beautiful as Wren's London masterpieces—Middlebury had one of the handsomest churches in New England.

The Sabbath services Great Great Grandfather and his family attended in this new meetinghouse followed the set Congregational pattern: prayer, singing, and sermons—with emphasis on the sermons. No fifteen or twenty minute affairs were these discourses. If one could avoid the eagle eye of the beadle, lightfooting up and down the aisles, the church-goer could count on a good hour and a half snooze, every Sunday morning and every Sunday afternoon. The sermons were too long to be challenging, and often too dull to convey much by way of message to the common throng. In spite of the general acceptance of religion as essential community furniture,

it was always on the defensive; the purpose and benefits of religion were, year in and year out, a favored subject. Thomas Merrill stated the thesis aptly: "Religion is calculated to cool the fire of ambition, to give a serenity of mind in the midst of the whirl of business, to teach the instability of earthly things, the frailty of one's own frame, the vanity of worldly enjoyments and the importance of laying up a treasure where moth and rust doth not corrupt. Religion will pour oil and balm into the wounds and afford a few beams of consolation through the dark cloud of adversity. Religion checks the ardor and impetuosity of the youth, counsels, cautions, advises and leads him in the path of reputation and usefulness to the goal where he receives those laurels which will not fade."

All ministers had been trained in the school of Whately's logic: there was structure to a good sermon as rigid as a Hollywood formula. In orthodox Addison County manner the text led off with something to prove or disprove, and the "firstlys" and "secondlys" were counted off on the irreverent fingers of Great Great Grandfather's children as a sort of game, with underbreath betting on whether the "lastly" would follow "sixthly" or "eighthly." Even the deacons failed to detect the evolution of a pretty piece of literary architecture.

Pastors had very definite ideas of what their position in the community ought to be. Particularly at ordinations and inductions they reiterated to each other and to their flocks what their responsibilities were. They expected themselves "to labour privately in the ardent prosecution of their studies . . . and in improving their

ministerial gifts . . . , to labour by faithfully and zealously preaching the Gospel in public . . . , to labour by occasionally visiting and catechising the flocks we are appointed to oversee . . . , to labour by going abroad as opportunity is afforded and conveying the message of salvation to those who are destitute." "We are ambassadors of Christ," summarized the celebrated Salem pastor, Alexander Proudfit, to a Middlebury audience, "and wait to know the issue of our embassy."

Any text, no matter how abstract, could be plucked from any chapter of the Bible and made to serve as the backbone of a long and laborious discourse. It was a good test of a minister's ability and imagination to open the Bible, place a finger at random on a Bible verse and build up a powerful exposition on it. Titled sermons carried such handles as "The Spiritual Steward," "The Government of God Desireable," "Strictures on Christian Communion," "Antichrists kingdom clearly pointed out: which cannot agree with the kingdom of Jesus Christ," "Christ displeased with the Unfaithful," "Something Must be Done: A New Year's Sermon," "Election of Jacob and Rejection of Esau."

The semicircular arrangement of pews all facing the high pulpit exemplified functional architecture at its most efficient; no word or gesture could be missed on account of poor acoustics or visibility. Everyone went to church unless he had some legal reason for remaining at home. Ordinary colds, ordinary illnesses were no excuse. Babies and tottering grandpas, mothers, fathers, and gawky, ill-dressed sons all squeezed into the family pew,

rented by the year. The elder took the aisle seat and kept his finger on the latch of the pew door.

The pattern for family prayers was transposed in kind to the church family. Fear and terror of God echoed and re-echoed through the great silences of the church—silences broken too with sniffing babies and chronic coughs. Ministerial prayers, like the family version, began with universalities and stepped down anticlimactically to home trivialities. If the local newspaper missed any town scandal it was more than likely to crop out in the parson's prayer. Regardless of import, the phrasing was couched in ponderous and awesome tongue:

"We are oppressed with corruption, O God, a body of sin and death compasses us round about. Deep calleth unto deep and we are ready to say we are cast out of thy sight, particularly Amos Hawes who is sorely tried with temptation against which he has strove and prayed and over which he has mourned. Yet the temptation returns with new violence and brings him almost to despair. See, Saviour, our helpless souls at thy feet; O raise us up, support us and enable us to lay hold of thy strength that we may not be confounded. Our worldly trials are heavy. Mrs. Alexander is afflicted in her person with disease, there is sickness in the family of Mr. Burbank, the Murdocks have been touched with reproach. Lord, put thy fear into our souls. Alas for our vile and selfish hearts. Make our sins grieve us more deeply. Remove not our candlestick away, as by our manifold iniquities we have most justly provoked thee to do, and hear the prayers of Thy people who cry day and night before Thee. And sum up all our imperfect prayers saying, Our Father . . ."

Singing was the one feature that lightened the pro-

ceedings. It gave the squirming children a rest from the hard seats and Great Great Grandfather a chance to conceal a stretch. A tuning fork or mouth organ was the usual vehicle for arriving at approximately the right key, and trial and error eventually rallied the congregation into something like an ensemble. Later a trio of assorted string and wind instruments helped to cover up the congregational efforts at improvised harmony.

Seminary instructions on the extent of church singing were vague and cautious, designed to fit the idiosyncrasies of parish beliefs. "It must depend upon the circumstances. It is perfectly safe to say, however, that the form of singing should prevail which, on the whole, seems best adapted, for the time being, to promote the end in view, the spiritual worship of God. Of this the minister may be supposed to be the best judge, and he certainly will be if he takes the trouble to inquire into circumstances. It is merely suggested that in the present state of misused knowledge, the first and second singing be by the choir and the third (after sermons) by the congregation."

Middlebury was liberal with regard to the use of song in religious services. And it was for the cultivation of congregational singing that groups like the "Association for the Promotion of Sacred Music" were formed. In their outside rehearsals, tunes were memorized by heart, then repeated a few times in the church, and "transferred from the choir to the congregational department to become common property."

"The choir," cautioned one authority, "must yield to the musical infirmities of the people; if the tune should



sometimes err they must exercise forbearance and if the time should linger they must not apply too severe a remedy, but endeavor gently to urge along the mass of sound."

Among the masses of sound urged along were Mozart's "Hampstead":

"The saffron tints of morn appear,  
And glow across the east;  
The brilliant orb of day is near  
To dissipate the mist;  
And while his mantling splendors dart  
Their radiance o'er the skies  
To chase the darkness of my heart,  
O God of light arise."

Or Giardini's popular Italian hymn:

"Come, Thou Almighty King,  
Help us Thy name to sing.  
Help us to praise,  
Father all glorious,  
O'er all victorious  
Come and reign over us  
Ancient of days."

Great Great Grandfather's church-going was an all day affair. His family had time between morning and afternoon sessions to hurry home for a quick dinner, but out-of-towners had to picnic around their carriages and sun themselves in the park in summer, or in winter munch sandwiches around the two little stoves that furnished the only heat in the huge building. The recess also provided opportunity during December and January to refuel the indispensable foot warmers from the

ecclesiastical fires or borrow coals from neighbors in the center of the village.

When Sabbath School was introduced in 1815, Great Great Grandfather questioned with the rest of the town conservatives the propriety of having his youngsters studying the Bible on *Sunday* morning in the same manner that one would delve into any week-day subject. But after prayerful consideration he permitted the children to go to Deacon Phillip's or Mrs. Halladay's for Bible instruction as an experiment, and as soon as he found they were really memorizing texts and songs he gave open encouragement to the new plan and even took a turn at Sunday School teaching himself when the meetings were held during church intermissions.

Among perhaps fifty percent of the community, religion was considered the primary purpose of this life—merely a transitory preparation for the next. Religion was a business; it came before all other interests, and gave birth to dozens of organizations large and small, loosely connected with the church: The Female Bible Society, Temperance Society, Society for the Suppression of Vice, the Middlebury College Charitable Society, Addison County Christian Depository, the Colonization Society, the Middlebury Female Association for Foreign Missions, the Maternal Association, the Addison Consociation. Great Great Grandmother was a joiner and in her rocking chair at these meetings helped administer local charity, sew for the heathen, and bring on the eighteenth amendment.

Campaigns for church membership came in the form of revivals, and brought searchings of heart even to

Great Great Grandfather's devout household. Once a top-notch evangelist arrived in town, the backslider had small chance of not being returned to the fold. All the stops were pulled out. No one dared talk, think, discuss anything but religion. Jedediah Burchard was the classic revivalist of the middle 1830's, capable of wringing tears and new church members from every community where he was admitted. His language was that of the man in the street and he drew him in.

"... Now Christians, you see how necessary it is that you have the joy of your salvation restored. . . . Keep those boys still there, by the door. O what a stupid state this Church is in! My soul! You have been as cold as Greenland these two years!—You'll almost freeze one to death! The Church must come out! Come out! . . . There's no being on earth I so detest as a hypocrite. I won't be one. You can't talk about God and salvation. 'Ye are dumb dogs.' You need not laugh,—this is Scripture. God calls you so. . . .

"My dear friends, I wish to illustrate to you what I mean by submitting to Jesus Christ. There was a man in one of the southern counties of New York,—Saratoga, if I'm not mistaken—his house got afire one night about eleven o'clock—the moon was shining—one of these story and a half houses. His son Henry, a fine little fellow, four or five years of age, slept in the upper story, in a small bed-room. He heard the fire crackling—jumped out of bed—ran down stairs and tried to extinguish the flames. All at once he remembered that his son Henry was still in the house. He tries to go up the stair case, but cannot. The dense smoke and flames rush through, and the entrance to the chamber is all on fire! He calls—Henry!—Henry!—but no Henry answers. The poor little fellow is fast asleep! He hears nothing—neither the crackling of the devouring element, nor his father's cries! As a last resort, the father takes a

long pole and striking with all his might, he hollered—Henry!—Henry! He heard at last, and came to the window—‘What, father?’ says he. ‘Jump!—jump for your life—the house is on fire!’ The poor boy climbs up to the window sill—he sits and sees the fire behind him and overhead—and then looks down—he sees his father. ‘Jump, my boy!’ ‘Father, I can’t jump!’ He gets the window open—‘Jump!’ ‘I can’t! I can’t!’ At last he lets himself out of the window;—‘Let go!’ said his father, ‘I’ll catch you—I tell you, you shant hurt a hair of your head; let go!’ ‘O, I can’t let go.’ The fire comes nearer and nearer, there is no alternative—the boy sees it. ‘Father,’ he cries, ‘I come—catch me!’ He drops—in a moment he is in his father’s arms!

“Now, sir, whoever you are, if unregenerated, you are in just the same situation. You are hanging over the fire of eternal damnation. Every breath you draw brings you nearer and nearer. Let go all your dependence on self righteousness and every thing else. Let go! Let go! Jesus Christ stands to catch you. You have his everlasting promise that he’ll save you. How many of you are willing to do it to-night? All you that are, manifest it by rising, all over the house. . . .

“ . . . And now, I want every man, woman and child, (you in the gallery there too) to come forward and take these anxious seats. Come! Come forward! We wont hurt ye! Many a one blesses the day when he took the first step. Don’t be ashamed of Christ! Make room there, you old professors! Clear those seats if you please. . . .”

Burchard was a converted, second class actor from the metropolitan stage and his evangelism had its effect on the church. Any good “season of revival” would draw as many as a hundred new “professors,” and two hundred was not unusual. People talked of the “overwhelming interest,” the “new recruits,” “the great re-

sults," as one would discuss a Chamber of Commerce campaign or military enlistment. And the effect upon individuals after attending the meetings was as incredible as the case of Jeff Booge whom Great Great Grandfather had heard described as "thoughtless as a bruit when he lies down in the yard":

"... In a most distressful and importunate manner he would cry to God for mercy. As if regardless of any persons being present, he prayed almost without intermission, some of the times on his knees, and some of the time in his chair. His agony was great and the scene affecting beyond anything that can be conceived by anyone who was not an eye witness. Never did I see such a solemn testimony to total depravity. . . . Friday, I visited Mr. Booge again. He appeared to be an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile. I trust he has been brought from the pit of miry clay and placed upon the rock of ages which never moves. He does not allow himself to hope; but he appears to have experienced great consolation. . . ."

The church was judicial as well as legislative, though its penalties for misbehavior were limited pretty much to the embarrassment of public confession and excommunication. Dancing, traveling on Sunday, card-playing, attending the Episcopal Church, intoxication, using the name of God in vain were all booked in the same category as severe offenses—for which one could be excommunicated. Absenting oneself from public worship, without just reason or cause, unnecessary visiting on the Sabbath, not having had the children in the family baptized, and neglect of family prayers were breaches as cardinal.

"By the temptation of my own wicked heart," read

one typical voluntary confession, "I have been left to fall into the sin of doing business on the Sabbath, for which I do heartily repent and pray God to forgive me and ask forgiveness of the church." With the same suspense that gossip was waited for in the pastoral prayer, one waited for the long reading of the shrifts from the pulpit:

"I was walking in the streets of Middlebury at an improper hour in the night of the tenth of August and I did, without reflecting on the consequences or impropriety of the act, knock at the door of a certain house in this village, thereby disturbing the inhabitants of the dwelling."

"I disobeyed a plain and positive command of my Saviour by union in prayer with an excommunicated person."

"Contrary to the rules of the church, I have partaken of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper with the Methodist Society, knowing at the same time that there was in that society and at that communion a person who had been excommunicated from this church."

Occasionally there was defiance to this rigid and rather hypocritical law, as in the case of one gentleman of the world who was accused of reading newspapers on the Sabbath. "I'd rather remain at home and read the newspapers than go to church and hear a sermon," replied the accused to the dumfounded audience. The wrath of God and the pastor was ready for such: "We do therefore, praying the Great Head of the church to add his blessing, proceed to separate you from our body, and you are hereby excommunicated and cut off and

denied the enjoyment of any ordinance or privilege in this church. We refuse to fellowship with you as a Christian, withdraw our watch over you and consider you cast out of the visible church. We feel bound to treat you as the word of God directs to treat an excommunicated person. 'Have no company with him that he may be ashamed; put away from among you that wicked person; keep no company with him, no, not to eat.' May God sanctify his own institution for your repentance and reformation."

College students were, of course, required to attend Sunday services at the church as well as their own chapel meetings scheduled twice a day during the week. But in spite of the social and religious life which town and gown had in common, a slightly different emphasis in brands of faith existed. The townsfolk got full satisfaction out of praying for the Godless College youth and the collegians were equally solicitous of the damned in town.

"This afternoon," wrote one undergraduate, "Brother Fisk and myself took a tour of the village and conversed with as many as we could upon the subject of religion. We solemnly warned sinners to repent, and we leave the event with God. . . . We joined in prayer before we parted, and it was sweet praying to God, who hears when sinners cry."

But a village matron countered by writing to a friend in a neighboring village:

" . . . I have a request to make of you . . . that you will be fervent, constant, and persevering in your intercessions at the throne of almighty grace for the outpouring of the

Holy Spirit on our college. There are a number of young men in the senior class who have been brought up in this highly favored village, children of pious parents, and who are soon to go out into the world without religion and what, oh what, is to be their influence! at this day when pious selfdenying persevering young men are so much needed. I do think the mothers and sisters in this church are a little awake to this subject, so much so that at our last monthly meeting they agreed in view of the affecting circumstances to set apart a certain hour each day to supplicate the throne of mercy in behalf of college and particularly the class I have mentioned. . . . God is blessing other colleges and why can he not bless us?"

Responsibilities for religious and moral education of Middlebury were honorably shared by the press. Of course it was good business to devote a few inside columns to a long sermon, since the editor could count on Great Great Grandfather's reading them *in toto* at family prayers the next morning, and nobody would miss the adjacent ads for shaving soap and Cuban cigars; but the editor honestly undertook to publish what the public ought to read rather than what it might prefer to read. His constitutional privilege of a free press was new enough still to be appreciated. Sermons from every part of English-speaking Christendom found a place in his paper if he had the space and the time to set them up in eight point type.

Periodically Great Great Grandfather subscribed to Middlebury weeklies like the *Christian Herald*, the *Christian Messenger*, and the *Religious Reporter*—newspapers in the same sense as were the *Mercury* or the *National Standard*, but devoted primarily to "religious



intelligence" rather than politics, to "occasional essays on religious subjects, full accounts of revivals and the state of religion in Vermont" and also to a "summary of political intelligence and passing events in Europe and America."

"A very considerable portion of the public have apparently become weary of the political controversies which have so long agitated our country," read the editorial platform of the *Christian Herald*. "While, however, they wish to banish from their minds a spirit of controversy, they are anxious to see a summary of passing events. It is noticeable also that there prevails an increasing avidity to become acquainted with the religious concerns of our own country, and the mighty events which are taking place in other parts of the globe."

The early nineteenth century was a man's world; women were given small opportunity for suffrage even in religious affairs. It was a man's religion and he felt it his duty to impress the female with her spiritual responsibilities in fragrant phrases:

"Religion in a female secures all her interests. It graces her character, promotes her peace, secures esteem, and adds a dignity and a worth, indescribable to all her deeds. How sweet! when the mistress of a family is the handmaid of the Lord—when the mother of a family is an example of piety—when the wife of the bosom is espoused to the Redeemer! how desirable that the daughter be a chaste virgin of Christ! that the sister leaneth on his arm, who sticketh closer than a brother! that the songsters of the temple belong to the heavenly choir! How pleasant, when the ab-

sent husband can think of home, and reflect that angels watch the place, that they may guard the interest and the health of his heaven-born companions, and children of the covenant! . . .

"Religion has always a peculiar sweetness, when it mingles with the modest softness of the female character. So the dew drop borrows odour and colour from the rose.

"Females need the comforts, the hopes, and the prospects of religion, more if possible, than the other sex. Subject to the trials of disobedience, and the weakness of a feebleness of constitution their state, when raised by improvement, and propped with Christian consolations is still of subjection and pain. Suppose one of your number yoked to a husband of acid temper, and the prey of disappointment and disease, where, but from Heaven, does there dawn upon her one beam of light. But if she can look upward and descry a place of rest when the toils of life are finished—a home where she may be happy, a friend that will ever be kind, and a nature raised above fatigue, and pain, and death—then, while the pains of living are softened by the hope of dying, and earth blotted out by the glories of heaven she can exercise patience and submission, till the time appointed her for release."

Congregationalism by no means lacked competition: the first Methodist church was erected in 1816, the Episcopal church consecrated in 1827, the Baptist in 1838, and the Catholic in 1839, but, like the Congregationalists, most of the societies were organized years before they had meetinghouses, and took their turns meeting at private homes, the Courthouse, or other public buildings. Many of the most distinguished citizens belonged to these churches, but the predominant sect was Congregational; the Methodists and Catholics were accepted with no great acclaim.

"At Middlebury," wrote one Methodist circuit member, "I found a small and persecuted class. Our preaching was at the house of Lebbeus Harris; and in the midst of that village our average congregation was from twenty-five to thirty. Mr. and Mrs. Harris were deeply pious and ready to greet the preacher with joy at his coming, and to render him every service and accommodation to make him comfortable and happy while he stayed. . . . I have had stones and snow balls cast at me in vollies. I have had great dogs sent after me to frighten my horse as I was peacefully passing through small villages. . . . I have been saluted with the sound of 'Glory, hosanna, amen, hallelujah,' mixed with oaths and profanity. If I turned my horse to ride toward them, they would show their want of confidence both in their master and in themselves by fleeing like base cowards."

The first Catholic priest was treated with even greater distinction by the guileless Protestants. Father Daly, founder of the Middlebury Parish, returned to Boston after a brief stay in town to report modestly that he had "rendered himself unpopular. . . having some very bad people to deal with, who had threatened his life."

Great Great Grandfather was a Congregationalist. He was ardent in his faith, stubborn and a little sour in his self-righteousness. What he and the other church deacons thought was right, he did, and no one else was right. He was Godly, God-fearing, God-inspired, God-ordained, and we hope he passed on to the reward he expected.



## *THEIR ENTERTAINMENT*

**G**REAT GREAT GRANDFATHER'S America hadn't fought and won enough political battles to have the almanac decorated with red-letter holidays. In fact there was only one big boisterous day of complete let-down in the whole three hundred and sixty-five: the Fourth of July. On that day nothing was spared, hilarity was unconfined: the hard cider came out of the cellar, the beer kegs littered the park unnumbered, old uniforms and the best bonnets came out of the clothes closet, orators whetted their best speech, and every gun barrel was kept warm.

With a gun factory in town, with bears in the hills, and reminiscences of the War of Independence still on the tongues of the oldsters, there was no lack of muskets in Middlebury. They all came into play at dawn of the

Fourth, pounding echoes into the mountains, punctuated with the boom of cannons from every surrounding village.

The celebration proper got under way about the middle of the morning when everyone gathered at the tavern, and the old War hero, Colonel Chipman, began barking parade orders. The procession "escorted by the military moved with the greatest regularity from Mr. Mattocks tavern to the bridge where it was joined by about fifty of the students of the college." The procession then wheeled and marched back to the Courthouse where the rest of the morning was spent listening to prayers, "excellent pieces of music previously selected," a sermon, and a reading of the Declaration of Independence.

Long after dinnertime the starved patriots marched back to the tavern and "partook of entertainment under a green bower." But this green bower was strictly reserved for men. Great Great Grandmother and her friends were ushered to a tea party elsewhere in the village—and with good reason; the men's collation inevitably turned into a long-drawn-out drinking party, every cup and libation protected from regulations of the church by the label "toasts":—toasts to "The Day We Celebrate," the memory of Washington, John Adams, the President of the United States, the Vice-president, Congress—one after another to the accompaniment of "musket discharges and martial music," toasts to the heads of departments, the Constitution of the United States, the Judiciary of the United States, the Army, the Navy.

Along toward the middle of the afternoon they would work down toward State and local government, with drinks to the Governor and the State militia, ending the formal part of the program with drafts to the people of the United States, wives and sweethearts. After that, volunteer toasts started in and anything was in order: the State of Virginia, the clergy and the orator of the day, or anybody's special friends. Altogether it was an illuminating way of rehearsing all the steps in democratic government from town clerk to United States presidency. Since there were no evening fireworks, the celebration broke up toward chore time, and the men wavered off in the general direction of the bower where the women had been keeping sober all afternoon on black tea. Probably the record for Independence Day inebriation was set in 1835, when the total number of toasts ran to fifty-five, and a local citizen commented years after the effects had worn off that the "concussions of the guns" broke the windows in his house.

Great Great Grandfather's patriotic friends were always on the watch for a new day to celebrate and it is no fault of Adrian Holt that September 11th didn't become a legal holiday in Vermont. Convinced that the 1814 victory of MacDonough on Lake Champlain should be commemorated, and unable to round up any supporters in town, he finally borrowed a canoe in 1816 and paddled into the middle of the Lake and celebrated by himself. Then he solemnly reported his efforts to the public as a challenge and rebuke: "Having nothing on board to drink, I suppose it will not do to call them toasts, but on the bosom of the Lake which two years

since bore a hostile fleet . . . I pronounced sentiments accompanied with various exclamations and emotions." Six cheers for the Day and Commodore MacDonough echoed back from the Adirondacks, nine cheers for the Green Mountain Boys, two groans and a sigh for Governor Chittenden, and cheers, jeers, and tears to a long list of generals and majors according to their popularity.

"I sung the following ode," he concluded, "to the tune of *Yankee Doodle* and paddled to shore again in good order:

"Two years ago this very day  
In both fair wind and weather  
The British and M'Donough met  
He scorched them like a feather  
Yankee Doodle, one and all  
Yankee Doodle dandy  
We'll not submit to John Bull yet  
But with our arms be handy."

The only celebration that rivaled the Fourth of July was the County Fair, which was started in 1819 under the title of Agricultural Society Exhibition. In the early years, the premiums were small and the types of material exhibited limited. The best piece of "domestic manufactured fulled cloth of ten yards" brought twelve dollars and the best piece of dressed flannel ten. Six dollars was offered for the best half-dozen straw bonnets and twelve for a bull steer, a yearling, and a calf. The funds ran low after that and second prizes were made in teaspoons. However, the local editor was very proud of

the results of the first fair and insisted that "the domestic manufactures satisfactorily evinced that we should be under no necessity of sending abroad even for the finest clothes" and the cattle could "vie with any of their kind for form, size and beauty. . . . Among the concourse might be observed, not merely our respectable farmers, but men of every rank and profession, both in public and private life. The mechanick, the lawyer, the scholar, and the public functionary, true to their own interests and the prosperity of their country, were all equally animated upon the occasion."

But the one Fair that even the children of Great Great Grandfather and Great Great Grandmother never forgot came in 1821. Someone that year conceived the idea of rounding up all the oxen in the county and attaching them to a float. More oxen turned up than even the most optimistic exhibitionists had ever dreamed of. The morning of October 9th saw the town taken over with two hundred and seventy yoke, a grand total of five hundred and forty oxen, brown oxen, black oxen, white oxen, red and whites, black and whites, thoroughbreds and cross breeds—such a display of one kind of beast as no town west of Hamelin had seen since the Pied Piper walked toward the river with his retinue of rodents.

Expecting perhaps one-tenth of this number, the county had prepared a single cart "surmounted by a military flag and a sheaf of wheat, and upon which might be seen the weaver operating with his shuttle, the tailor with his needle, the shoemaker with his last, the saddler with his awl, and the clothier with his shearing machine, the cardmaker with his tooth cutter, together



with the wheelwright with his saw, and the carpenter with his square and compass, and surrounded with many of the products of their various employments." All the oxen were somehow hitched to this one cart and driven through town to a bucolic chorus of "Gee," "Haw," "Git" coming from two hundred and seventy competing drovers. How a half-mile procession of oxen could angle its way through all the "principal streets" and wind up intact at the Courthouse is a secret Great Great Grandfather's posterity can never know.

Showmanship on such a grand scale was rare, and there were few community entertainments—no matter how ostentatious—which were not prefaced or terminated with divine invocation. Even the Fair was formally opened with "prayer offered at the throne of grace." God was dragged into many an event *ex machina* to add a moment of dignity and decorum to the most spirited joviality.

Christmas at Great Great Grandfather's house was a day of religious commemoration, not yet recognized as a holiday. Presents were exchanged with relatives, and stores went so far as to advertise gift suggestions, but Christmas trees and parties were indulged in only by the pagan. The church and Great Great Grandfather had no part in it.

Thanksgiving, on the other hand, was virtually a church festival—a sort of glorified week-day Sabbath, scheduled twice a year by gubernatorial proclamation, usually in April and December. It was a Fast day of "public humiliation and prayer." Ministers were commanded to assemble the people and pray for preservation

from "contagious and moral sickness, that He should cause the Earth to yield her increase . . . that He would prosper our trade, manufactures and commerce, that He would smile upon our seminaries of learning." The difference between the April and the December Thanksgiving was principally one of tone: petition in the spring, acknowledgment in the fall. However, Great Great Grandfather didn't go on a hunger strike. He took the family to church but their real unconfessed interest was focused on maple sugar cakes, dried whortleberries, fiddle music, and wild geese. There wasn't as much to eat in April as in December, not as much in the cellar to be thankful about, not as much tangible evidence of God's goodness to celebrate over, so the autumn date was the only one to survive.

Two hundred years and two hundred miles served to weaken the effect of Puritanism in central Vermont. As far as music was concerned Great Great Grandfather had forgotten all about Jonathan Edwards and Cotton Mather. Being a member of the Middlebury Association for the Promotion of Sacred Music, he liked to repeat a bold challenge on the value of community song: "I presume there are many who would be no more impressed and diverted by the Grand Hallelujah Chorus of Handel's Messiah, than a frog pond. While others, from hearing it, would, as it were, be exalted to heaven. Others again lend an ear merely as critics upon the skill of the performer. But would all who have voices cultivate them and unite according to the best of their skill and judgment in singing well composed pieces, together with the Psalms and Hymns, all would be deeply af-

fect and Psalmody would like Prayer become a powerful means of grace."

Great Great Grandfather's music was closely associated with religion, but it was also a fixed part of his entertainment, more commonly accepted as secular diversion than as part of religious worship. On winter evenings when guests called, he loved to gather everybody about the kitchen hearth or the new parlor stove and intone to bass viol accompaniment "Old Hundred":

"Be Thou, O God, exalted high;  
And as Thy glory fills the sky  
So let it be on earth displayed  
Till Thou art here as there obeyed."

Or the familiar lines of "Bath":

"Life is the time to serve the Lord,  
The time t'insure the great reward;  
And while the lamp holds out to burn  
The vilest sinner may return."

"Dundee," "Quito," "New Cambridge," "Clifford," "Barbery," and "Epping" were equally popular, and for its name's sake "Middlebury":

"Dear Jesus, when, when shall it be  
That I shall no more break with Thee?  
When shall this war of passion cease  
And I enjoy a lasting peace?"

Through the years Middlebury usually supported some kind of band or orchestra ready at a few weeks' notice to give a concert at the Masonic Hall, to assist

the Addison County Musical Society in a presentation of Handel's Messiah or Ode to St. Cecilia's Day at the meetinghouse, to lead a Commencement procession, or simply to sit around in a home parlor and participate in improvised chamber music for self-entertainment and self-expression.

Great Great Grandfather even went so far as to memorize all the popular folksongs and ballads about sailors, old maids, beautiful belles; woodsman's songs, farmer's songs, and carpenter's songs. Many of them were purely traditional, brought originally from English hillsides and arriving in Vermont patched and embroidered. By the third decade of the century popular glees, madrigals, and rounds were becoming increasingly familiar. Effect was entirely dependent on four part harmony and there was plenty of it and not much but a repetitious pattern of words to keep it alive.

"Come let's sing a merry round

Wake the cheerful glee

Sing aloud in joyful sound

Happy, happy we.

Happy we, happy we, happy we, happy we, happy we,  
happy we.

Oh! happy we, oh! happy we,

Sing a round

With joyful sound

Happy, happy we.

Happy we, happy we, happy we, happy we, happy we,  
happy we,

Happy we, happy we, happy we, happy we, happy we,  
happy we,

Happy we."

Many of the rounds and glees had caught the oratorio spirit and around two phrases of wit a song of pretentious dimensions could be spun.

“He who trusts in ladies fair  
Builds a castle in the air,  
Whoever trusts in ladies fair,  
But builds a castle in the air,  
He who trusts in ladies fair  
Trusts in ladies fair,  
Who trusts in ladies fair,  
Builds a castle in the air.”

Having established the theme, Great Great Grandfather and the other three members of his quartet proceeded to develop it along the same lines.

“He who trusts in ladies fair  
Builds a castle in the air  
Just like the wind  
Just like the wind  
Just like the wind (*ad infinitum*)

“Like the changing wind  
The ever changing wind  
The ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, changing wind,  
Like the cha, cha, cha, cha, cha, cha, cha, cha, changing  
wind  
ChangING Wind.”

One can still hear the applause bowling over the Green Mountain foothills on a misty night.

Of course this type of entertainment was reserved for the culturally elect, and the smarties who spent their

evenings smoking, drinking, and gaming at the taverns would have none of it. Middlebury was undoubtedly the town referred to in the account of an anonymous observer who expressed his disappointment and disgust "at some of the habits which appeared among one class of people on the west side of the Green Mountains." "I allude to the young men and boys," he announced ominously, "at the public houses of entertainment, and more particularly in the evening. I with sorrow witnessed many fine healthy young men and even small boys (who never ought to be absent in the evening, without express permission from those whose care it is to see to them) puffing segars, drinking grog and not infrequently surrounding the gammon and checker board—city huckster-shop fashion. At the same time the streets appeared thronged with another younger set, hooting and howling, savage like, and in imitation of the licentious cowboys and sooty chimney-sweeps in the suburbs of an ill-regulated city."

The temperance agitators were primed to answer such challenges with ponderous words: "Arouse, then, O ye Snuff-takers, Chewers, and Smokers! Exert yourselves to overcome this destructive and growing evil! The inhabitants of the United States are said to consume more tobacco than any other civilized nation on earth, or than any uncivilized, the Turks only excepted. Are you, then, ambitious to bear away the palm from the Mohametans, for these unenviable qualities, which that indolent, ignorant, and barbarous nation of smokers proverbially possesses.

"It is difficult to contemplate man in a more absurd

and ridiculous light than in his attachment to tobacco; a weed, not more nauseous to the taste than it is unfriendly to Health and Morals. . . . It may be asserted, on the highest medical authority, that the use of Tobacco impairs the appetite; that it promotes indigestion through the waste of the saliva in chewing and smoking; that it produces many of those disorders which are seated in the nerves; as tremors in the hands, head-ache, epilepsy, palsy, apoplexy and many other complaints. The hot smoke of tobacco has destroyed a whole set of teeth in a very short time. . . . Chewing fouls the mouth and necessarily renders the breath extremely offensive. The use of snuff injures the voice by obstructing the nose. . . .

"Smoking and chewing promote a thirst for strong drink. . . . Smoking disposes to idleness, which is the root of many evils. . . . The friends of tobacco offer two arguments in its favor, that it is a preservative from contagious diseases (but facts contradict this idea), that it relieves uneasiness which arises from eating a too plentiful meal. A far more rational and effectual remedy would be to eat less. . . . The greatest philosophers and physicians uniformly condemn the use of Tobacco."

But even these strata of Middlebury society, the snuff takers and tobacco chewers, were well organized and not a little slippery to deal with. They were the sophisticates who attended the Dancing Schools, joined the Wolf Club, paraded with the Green Mountain Rifle Company, supported the lotteries and were eager to get into the Fire Society. They had to have their sport and they found it in the Wolf Club which was ready at the first report of a track and a lost sheep to take up arms and

spend a nasty day circling Chipman Hill or a mountain for the possible chance of leveling a bead at this animal which annually extracted its toll from county farms. Usually they got the wolf.

To put up as good a front as possible to the church and educational authorities, dancing parties at Stowell's Hall were labeled "schools" where particular attention was given to "the deportment, address and manner of those who are interested." The tobacco smokers left their cigars outside and went through rapturous and exhausting successions of jigs, reels, waltzes, and quadrilles.

Next in line as a sport came debating. Town meeting politics was everybody's business and debating was the first essential for participation. The long list of capable and respectable lawyers in town furnished incentive to good forensics, but the example set by the College boys was what counted. Quarterly both the senior and junior classes held their public speaking exhibitions and no literate person within trotting distance of Middlebury would miss one. All considered that exhibitions were the best regular entertainment the town offered and the Courthouse was usually packed for the orations and colloquies on "Agricultural Improvement," "College Pedantry," "Progress of Astronomy," and "Intellectual Improvement."

"In passing through your village, I was invited by a friend, to attend the evening exhibition of the Senior Class in Middlebury College," wrote one critic. "It is delightful to a mind even as little philosophical as my own, to trace the gradual progress of the human mind—to watch its bursting germ, and its expansion into blos-



soms—to witness the efforts of early genius, sallying in various directions into the field of science, plucking its fruits, wandering in its shades and reposing upon its banks of flowers and fragrance, although it cannot hope to reach its confines, and much less to enlarge its dimensions. A satisfaction of this kind in no ordinary degree, was to be derived from the compositions of these beardless competitors for literary distinction. . . .”

Not to be outdone by the more privileged collegians, the town lads formed a speaking and debating club of their own to untangle in public such knotted questions as “Is Phrenology worthy of public credence?” “Ought actions for the breach of marriage promises to be encouraged by public sentiment?” “Was the manner in which our ancestors settled North America justifiable?”

More of this variety of entertainment came every August at graduation time. Great Great Grandfather would no more miss a Commencement than would the College President. He went, along with all the merchants and their apprentices, lawyers, doctors, farmers, their children, and hired men. There were no fireworks and less drinking; otherwise it was quite on the order of a Fourth of July celebration: parade, band, oratory, “green bowers,” and picnics. Patiently the audience at the Courthouse or the Congregational Church submitted to hours of exhibition orations, dialogues, colloquies, and disputes—on what usually turned out to be the hottest day of the summer. Middlebury was a defender of the Classics to the last post, so it was a social duty for Great Great Grandfather to make believe he comprehended in full the Latin and Greek in which much of

the program was given. He sat through it all, a two- or three-hour session in the morning, another as long in the afternoon, and came back insatiably for more in the evening.

But even these academic events could not pass without criticism. "College exhibitions are our village theatre," alleged one Jeremiah, "and as far as they exert any influence at all, it partakes strongly of the magic of theatrical performance. Here there are wanting many dangerous accompaniments of expense, refreshments and bad company. But the calm and innocent imagination of susceptible youth may be effectually thrown into a useless and dangerous tumult or excitement by the very tame dialogue as by a very splendid play."

The censors really had something to complain about in 1821 when the first theatrical company arrived for a four-night run at Mattocks Tavern. The fliers blatted to the awe-stricken public:

### THEATRE

At the House of Mr. Mattocks

Middlebury

for four Nights only

Mr. Blanchard respectfully begs leave to inform the public that he has fitted up a theatre at the above place: which will be opened on Tuesday evening, Mar. 13, with the celebrated tragedy (by the Rev. Dr. Hume) called

Douglas 8

or the Noble Shepherd

After the Play, a number of sentimental and comic songs,

by the company. The whole to conclude with the laughable farce, in 2 acts called the

### Village Lawyer

Doors open at half past 6—performance to commence at 7 o'clock precisely. Tickets 50 cents—children half price; to be had at Mr. Mattocks Inn, the Theatre will be elegantly illuminated, and good music is engaged to enliven and exhilarate the whole.

The "Rev. Dr." business was undoubtedly pure pseudonym, designed to bait the church fathers, and it worked, though Great Great Grandfather had plenty of mental reservations after the performance. There was not a hint of religious disapproval in the first home drama criticism he ever had a chance to read:

"Last week we were highly gratified with the performance of Mr. Blanchard's company of Theatrical Players in this village. They performed four evenings only, to a full house and an applauding audience. . . . Each evening, after the more substantial fare of Tragedies and Dramas we were entertained by Songs. . . . Mr. Woodruff has not force or expression enough for a Tragedian or pliability sufficient for a Comedian. . . . Mr. C. Blanchard also wants force and expression. His voice is bad; but he has a good eye. Mr. W. Blanchard is a tolerable comedian but fails in Tragedy. Mr. Thornton in Tragedy has too much roar and rant—he is too loud and boisterous; but in Comedy he has few equals. His Old Man is perfect. Mr. Greene is one of the first players in the country . . . he studies nature—she is his chief instructor. . . . Indeed he is a player of great genius. Mrs. Thornton is a good Comedian, but can never excel in Tragedy. Mrs. Greene is by far the best performer in the Company. She is a Lady to whom nature has been

bountiful in personal appearance and she is equally happy in correct judgment . . . She was the tender mother whose tears flowed spontaneously and often choked her utterance—and . . . the transition from tears to joy and from joy to tears was so rapid as almost to defy credulity. . . . Upon the whole we consider her a first rate actress . . . who in a few years will stand above all competition."

But the storm broke as soon as the enjoyment had worn off and the theater-goers had stopped rubbing their eyes. With succinctness and finality one spokesman said all that there was to say: "Every Christian ought to abstain from theatres. When he partakes of them, he violates the vows of baptism. However innocent he may imagine himself to be, in bringing from those places an untainted heart, it is sullied by being there; since by his presence alone, he has participated in the works of the devil. . . ."

Great Great Grandfather reluctantly agreed. Middlebury didn't see any more professional theater for a long time.

The first forerunner of the Circus arrived in 1807 at Case's Inn in the form of AN AFRICAN LION. "This noble animal," ran the posters, "is between 3 and 4 feet high, measures 9 ft. from the nostrils to the tail, and is of a beautiful dun color. He is 6 years old, and weighs 400 weight. His legs and tail are thicker than those of a common sized ox. He was caught in the woods of Goree in Africa. . . . He is under very good subjection; the person who has the care of him can comb his mane, and make him lie down and get up at pleasure. . . . He is really worthy the contemplation of the curious. . . . For

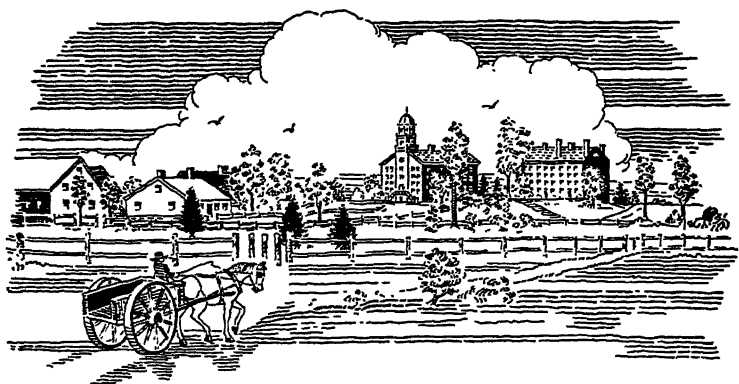
the better accommodation of those who wish to see the Lion, the owner has been to considerable expense to fit a room, where the Ladies and Gentlemen can all have seats. The Lion will be let loose out of the cage in a room below fitted for this purpose. The price of Admittance to grown persons is 25 cents—Children half price.”

It cost Great Great Grandfather a great deal of money, but he took the children. They shouldn't miss seeing this animal that appeared so frequently in his Bible readings, and he weakened again to the broadsides picturing an Egyptian mummy in full regalia and coffin—"taken from a Catacomb excavated in a solid rock in the ruins of the city of Thebes. . . . The proprietors flatter themselves that no person who has a taste for historical information, and who has not seen a Mummy will let this pass by without seeing it. Tickets 12 ½ cents at the Bar, Vermont Hotel.”

Neither circus nor side show was an annual affair, but year by year the idea grew. 1821 brought to Mr. Haynes' Tavern a "Grand Caravan" including the mammoth Lion of Asia, a full grown Camel, the Llama of Peru ("whose breath is said to be a cure for the whooping cough"), the Ichneumon, and the Anteater. The display of these LIVING ANIMALS was supplemented by "a famous Belona Organ, the ancient Jewish Cymbal and other instruments." And by the 1830's the circus in its twentieth-century conception was a reality to Addison County big-top followers. Over the impossible roads that still led north came twenty-seven wagons drawn by eighty horses; a company of fifty men, "the

largest elephant ever offered to the American public" (12,000 pounds) and a menagerie that included most of the animal alphabet from Antelope to Zebra. Besides there was a real show with "flying vaulting," might feats, horsemanship, a "frolic on stilts, tumbling and vaulting by a whole company of Flying Phenomenons."

But the carnival spirit was not akin to Middlebury nor its society. Occasionally it broke up the serious monotone of rural life and brought superficial glimpses of an exotic world, but Great Great Grandfather was far too sensible to accept it as regular entertainment diet. In the end the homemade fun, the parlor sings, the Agricultural Society meetings and the College exhibitions were excitement enough and were less likely to bring on an orgy of repentance in the form of religious revivals or prayer meetings sponsored by the Society for the Suppression of Vice. No matter how far Great Great Grandfather's entertainment went, there was still a New England conscience to reckon with, still a Yankee sensibility to check excess.



## *THEIR EDUCATION*

**T**HERE were usually a couple of College boys boarding at Great Great Grandmother's. Most of the folks in town charged a dollar and a half a week, but as a charitable gesture she served her beef collops and boiled custards for a dollar a week. Great Great Grandfather took the other fifty cents out of the boys in information. He was a sympathetic host and counsel, persistently inviting them to family prayers—in spite of all the praying that was done for them on the Hill—and ready to bail them out of their troubles with unlimited funds of good advice.

The students were always trying their wings on some sort of misdemeanor under the label of a practical joke: stealing the bell from Chapel, swiping apples and fire-place wood, borrowing the stovepipe from a classroom

so that the freshmen would be smoked out of an Algebra class. Sooner or later Great Great Grandfather was bound to ferret out their participation in the deed and closet them with a talking to, before the President got his chance at them.

His favorite means of chastisement was to draw forth a copy of the laws of Middlebury College and make the offender read aloud the rule that covered the case, before he began to expand on the text:

"If any scholar shall be guilty of injury to a fellow-student, or to any person within the town of Middlebury, upon complaint and proof made thereof to the President, he shall, with the advice of the Tutors, give judgment thereon and order satisfaction to be made according to the nature of the offense or injury; which if any scholar shall refuse to do, he shall be publicly admonished; and if after admonition, he shall persist in such refusal, he shall be dismissed."

"If any scholar shall be guilty of opening by picklock, false key or other instrument, or breaking open the chamber, chest, or desk, or any other place under lock and key, or otherwise secured, belonging to any other person, he shall make good all damages, and shall be punished by fine, admonition, or expulsion, as the nature of the offense deserve. . . ."

"If any scholar shall ring the College bell except by order of the President or Tutor, he shall be fined or otherwise punished as the case may require."

"If any student shall indulge himself in gambling, he shall be liable to a fine of fifty cents for the first offence; and if he persist in the practice he shall be admonished,



suspended, or rusticated, according to the aggravation of the offence."

"If a scholar shall be guilty of drunkenness, he shall be fined not exceeding fifty cents; and if he persist in a course of intemperance, he shall be suspended, rusticated or expelled."

But when it came to a really funny joke, Great Great Grandfather was ahead of the others in roaring over it. He knew all the professors and all the students—everybody did. The boys were everlastingly frying the idiosyncrasies of their elders and he went into gales of laughter over their attempts at literary caricature.

"The President had lost his wig  
And couldn't get a new one.  
He stole the bristles from a pig,  
To represent the true one.

"Old Painter Hall was but a wreck.  
Of rooms and sash and blinds  
You could not find a Eucre deck  
Within its vast confines.

"The Chapel too was out of place.  
The bell had gone a belling.  
The steeple went a steeple-chase  
But where, there was no telling."

College life was rather Spartan in winter and Great Great Grandfather appreciated what the boys had to go through: out of bed long before dawn into a room heated only by the faint embers on the hearth. A dash downstairs with a wooden bucket to the cistern, while a room-

mate made up the fire. A pause at the outhouse on the way to chapel through ponderous drifts or frozen slush. Interminable chapel prayers while one shivered against his neighbor and saw his own breath rise in congealed clouds. A cold recitation in Euclid, logarithms, or integral calculus before breakfast. Across town for a seven o'clock meal of salt pork and gravy, potatoes and corn-bread. Then to the rooms "to follow diligently their studies" under strict supervision for three solid hours, interrupted by the frequent intrusion of a tutor or another recitation, followed in the afternoon by more intensive work from two until evening prayers.

The trustees and faculty were not a group to trifle with an easy curriculum to suit the tastes and aptitudes of their sons. The major diet was Greek and Latin—Greek and Latin in the forenoon, Greek and Latin in the afternoon, classic Greek and Latin for four years with enough philosophy, history, science, higher mathematics, and religion to salt it down. For the peculiarly erudite, French, German, and Hebrew could be elected from time to time when there was a professor on campus capable of teaching this academic embroidery. There were no departments, no spirit of departmentalization. The curriculum was a unit and entity. Any professor who was worth his salt could step into any class in any subject and carry on.

Religion was the mainstay of discipline—"the great bond of human society" as one Middlebury President put it. "It must constitute an essential part of every liberal and well-regulated plan of education; and ought to be the prime object of the scholar. Shall we pretend that

a little more abstract science or polite literature will compensate for the want of practical science of life and immortality?"

Middlebury students were not given a chance to answer the question. The chapel bell at five o'clock in the morning, and college fines, two cents for chapel absence, one cent for tardiness or "egressing without sufficient reason," and six cents for absence from "public worship on every Lord's Day," answered for them.

Probably the biggest shock Great Great Grandfather ever had came once when he started to give one of his quiet talks about religious discipline to a freshman. Freshy interrupted by opening his chap book and handing over the "Rules to be Observed" which he had penned himself and aimed to follow:

- I. To retire for secret prayer three times, daily.
  1. As soon in the morning as returned from recitation.
  2. As soon at noon as returned from recitation.
  3. At evening as soon as returned from prayers.
- II. To read the scriptures after social prayer in the morning; and always a portion of the Greek Testament immediately before a dedicatory prayer, which is next to precede my retiring every evening.
- III. To attend exclusively to my classics from the time of the conclusion of morning exercises till eleven.
  2. From short exercises after dinner to attend to my classics until half past 3 or 4 o'clock.
  3. From the time till prayers, to attend to useful reading.
  4. From my return from prayers till dark, on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings, to attend to speaking or writing.

5. During the same interval on Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday evenings, to prepare a subject for the evening meeting.
- IV. To spend the whole of Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings in useful reading.
  2. To employ the remnant of Tuesday and Friday evenings, after meeting, in writing my diary, letters, or pieces, for Societies.
  3. Saturday evenings in reading the Bible.
  4. Sabbath evenings in reading the Bible and Greek Testament, and in writing and reading my diary.
- V. Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, from after speaking till prayers, either in reading, writing, conversing, or transacting business. Saturday afternoon, all possible preparation to be made for the Sabbath—and, if possible, my Greek lesson to be read. Saturday p. m. also, may be spent most commonly, in religious visiting. Sabbath, to be sanctified as the Lord directs.

The College year was spread over the entire calendar, and divided into three terms. A two weeks' spring vacation came late in May, a month's summer vacation followed the late August Commencement, and during January and February there were seven weeks off. But this seven-weeks vacation in winter wasn't a holiday: most of the students took it as a chance to earn an honest penny toward their College expenses, teaching in rural schools. They lay down their own pedagogy: "Reading, writing and the first principles and rules of arithmetic are indispensable requisites for all people who are above the condition of slaves. . . . Next to them in point of necessity and utility is a general knowledge of the

Geography and History of the Country in which we live. As soon as children are able to articulate the sounds of letters and words, they should begin to learn to read. . . . As soon as the fingers of the child are sufficiently strong to hold and manage a pen, it is time to begin to learn to write. . . . Young children may learn the nine figures or characters, as easily as they can learn so many letters of the alphabet. They can also get in memory the numerical tables: and plain addition, subtraction, multiplication and division are attainable at the age of nine or ten, and often sooner. . . . By the alternate exercises of reading and spelling, writing and cyphering that love of variety is gratified which is natural to every human breast. . . .”

The reports they brought back from their adventures in education were always given a sympathetic ear by Great Great Grandfather. “Ten dollars a month for a school master! And that is not the worst of it. I was put into a hideous kind of a building, called a school house, with broken doors and windows, a hugh stoney chimney, half tumbled down, round which the wind and storm blew in, like a hurricane, and old shattered tables and benches, standing in every direction. Presently the scholars came driving into the house, and rattling round with as little decorum and almost as dirty as so many quadrupeds. Here, amidst all this smoke, and dirt, and cold, and racket, I was expected to establish order and regularity, instruct them in the several branches of reading, writing, arithmetic, English grammar, etc., and instill into their minds the principles of morality, religion, decency and good manners. . . .

"Then instead of being genteely boarded, at a convenient distance, and provided with a room, fire, and candles, that I might usefully employ leisure hours, I was turned in among a whole family of noisy children; and stunned with noise and confusion from morning till night and from night till morning. And for all this I earn seventeen dollars and fifty cents for seven weeks' work."

Great Great Grandfather was mighty proud that his own youngsters in town had better school conditions than this. But he had fought for it. Back in Connecticut he had been exposed to the same sort of crossroads education. By suffering through six years of reading, writing, arithmetic—and rod—he had been elevated intellectually to a point where he could read a newspaper and the Bible with comparative ease, write a coherent letter in a decent hand, and add correctly any three columns of figures that ever found their way into his budget. But in his newly chosen land of liberty he wasn't going to tolerate having his children subjected to the same l'arning process.

The first district schools were hardly organized before pioneer parents began talking Grammar School. For the seventh session of the State Legislature the talk had crystallized into a petition. A charter was granted with one rather stiff stipulation "that the inhabitants of Middlebury and such others as may voluntarily subscribe therefor, shall build and finish a good and sufficient house for said Grammar School of the value of one thousand dollars *by the next stated session of the legislature.*"

Collecting a thousand dollars from poor settlers, not to mention the time clause, was as severe a condition as

could be attached to a little town eager to serve up an education, but they were ready to meet it and would not stop at a thousand. Every petty philanthropist within commuting distance of Middlebury would have to contribute his mite. And he did: homemade nails if he hadn't cash; labor if he hadn't lumber; hardware, furniture, sash, and plaster if he could make them. When the time came around for the next legislature to meet, the lawmakers could scarcely believe their ears and eyes, Middlebury had a four-thousand-dollar Grammar School, eighty by forty feet, three stories high, complete with dormitory rooms, recitation halls, a chapel, and library—duly incorporated The Addison County Grammar School.

But just before the building was completed Timothy Dwight, the vagabond President of Yale, happened to drop in on Seth Storrs one night and one of the first questions Seth popped was on the practicability of turning an Academy into a College. Dr. Dwight thought it over while his host assembled the town elders. Before the evening was very old he had pronounced his verdict: "the local situation, the sober and religious character of the inhabitants, their manners and various other circumstances, should render Middlebury a very desirable seat for a College."

Not even the State representatives could very well defy a dictum of the greatest living American educator. In the same session at which the completion of the Grammar School was announced, the legislators found themselves listening to a new petition: "The inhabitants of Middlebury induced by an ardent desire to promote

and encourage the education of youth by establishing and carrying into immediate operation a college or university within the State, have erected large and convenient buildings suited to the purposes of a college, and pray the legislature to establish a college in Middlebury and to grant a charter of incorporation to such trustees as shall be appointed, vesting in such trustees such rights and privileges as are enjoyed and exercised by such bodies. . . .”

The answer was “no” and the answer the following year was “no.” At Burlington a seminary was already chartered and it wasn’t prospering. If a seven-year-old institution of higher learning thirty miles north couldn’t drum up trade, how could one in Middlebury be expected to, even though the population of Middlebury was considerably greater than that of Burlington. Rutland wanted a college too; the State couldn’t support a college in every village. So the lobbyists tried a trick; the legislature was invited to meet at Middlebury in 1800 and see for themselves what a fine location the town offered for a college. The village was cleaned up, the worst ruts in the roads filled, and work started on a turnpike over the mountains; even a new hotel was constructed for their accommodation. The trick worked; the legislators were impressed; Middlebury was granted a college, and no one had very serious cause to regret it during Great Great Grandfather’s lifetime. In little more than three decades Middlebury became one of the best higher education institutions in New England—almost as large as Harvard—and with an alumni list reading like a Who’s Who: United States senators, Supreme



Court judges, diplomats, governors, missionaries whose names were revered in Africa and the Orient, explorers, college presidents, philologists and authors.

But Great Great Grandfather and his neighbors didn't stop with a College. There had to be classic and democratic schooling for everyone—women included. The same year the College was started they persuaded a Litchfield, Connecticut, girl, Ida Strong, to start a Ladies' Academy in the Courthouse. It took a bit of maneuvering to get around Pauline injunctions like "Suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." However, they defied the Bible and rallied the local press to the cause: "Why should females have a good education? In the first place because they are intellectual beings. And if intellectual, they are capable of being improved by a course of studies by which the other sex is allowed to be made much the better. It is allowed on all hands that the mind is improved by exercise; and that without subjecting it to proper labour in the season of forming habits, it is likely to become unmanageable and vicious. But the mind is the only part of you which is not fading and mortal. You may appear beautiful, while health is on the cheek, and the fire of youth sparkles in the eye. You may not perceive the need of a well-cultivated mind, while you are able to join in the sprightly dance, and to contemplate yourself with satisfaction at the toilet, or in the assembly of the young and beautiful, and fancy you are so regarded by every one else. The roses of health must fade and beauty must be blighted by the frosts of old age. The shrunk muscle must leave furrows on the cheek.

The toilet, the assembly, and the dance cannot restore the charms of youth. If your mind however, has been well cultivated, you have a source of inward beauty which can never dry up. If you have long and faithfully made up the toilet of your mind—if you have decked it with the choicest and richest furniture from the store-houses of great and good men's thoughts, you may laugh at the departure of the smooth forehead and healthy cheek. Believe me, then, when I tell you that it is to the character of the mind that you must look both for respectability and solid happiness. But the mind cannot be called upon at the eleventh hour, to supply the loss of beauty and the charms of youth."

Upon arrival, Miss Strong phrased her advertisements in the same vein: "Those who have a wish to bestow on their daughters those desirable accomplishments which adorn the mind, add a graceful and becoming dignity to the person and manners, and render them agreeable members of Society are informed that Miss Strong, the Preceptress of the Young Ladies Academy in this town, will take charge of the education of such young ladies as may be placed under her tuition."

The ladies were offered practically the same elementary bill of fare that the boys had: reading, writing, grammar, geography, arithmetic, composition. Embroidery and drawing were the only additional curricular features. And not to be outdone by the other sex, the girls too participated in public exhibitions at the Court-house, where they could speak their pieces and display their manual arts. In fact so popular was this event that they were allowed a two-night performance while the

men had but one. In 1802, the *Mercury* echoed the public enthusiasm: "To the performance of the Young Ladies belonging to Miss Strong's Academy at the Exhibition on Thursday and Friday evenings last is attached the merited approbation and applause of the very respectable and crowded audience assembled on the occasion."

Young hopefuls from lawyers' offices, stores and mechanics' shops, not having tangible funds to contribute, gallantly expressed their enthusiasm for the new venture by "building a plank walk across the flat ground in front of the building, where the deep mud rendered it otherwise inaccessible to female or male travellers; and in other ways contributed their labor to promote the enterprise."

The following year Miss Strong appealed for a building, and got one—a very considerable triumph, since the College and the men's Academy were now both forced to share one structure. Moreover a commons for the women was opened in 1804, with "particular attention given to the morals and manners of the young misses." Great Great Grandfather never dreamed that the women would be three-quarters of a century ahead of the men on this matter.

In four years Miss Strong built up a school that had no competitor within a radius of two hundred and fifty miles. Students literally poured in from every part of New England and New York. But without adequate financial support and assistance, the project was too great for any person even of rare stamina and energy. Ill health forced her to retire in 1804.

Three years later the school was taken over by Emma Hart, then only twenty years of age. The ground had been broken for her work, but there was plenty of cultivating to do. "The winter of 1807-08," she confessed, "was one of exceeding hardship for me. Tho' very cold, with frequent storms and much snow, I had to walk from Dr. Tudor's, where I boarded, to the academy, and when there to keep my school in a large long room, formed like an ordinary ball room, occupying the whole upper story, while the only means of gaining warmth was from an open fire, in a small fire place on the north end. Yet that winter I had an increased and very pleasant school. When it was so cold, that we could live no longer, I called all my girls on to the floor, and arranged them two and two, in a long row for a contra dance; and while those who could sing would strike up some stirring tune, I, with one of the girls for a partner, would lead down the dance, and soon have them all in rapid motion. After which we went to our school exercises again. The school had quite an increase in the spring from different parts of the state, and amounted to sixty. Among them and from the village, was a remarkable band of young maidens, ranging from about twelve to fifteen."

While the town boys were casting an appraising eye over this remarkable band of young maidens, Miss Hart wasn't free from a similar examination herself. It was the town banker and physician, John Willard, whose courtship she accepted and after a suitable nineteenth century interval between marriage and reemployment, she moved the whole school—reading, writing, and contra dance—

into his home. It was there that she wrote the pages that began to be famous even in Great Great Grandfather's day as the "Magna Carta of Higher Education of Women in America":

"A regular attention to religious duties would, of course be required. . . . The young ladies should spend a part of their Sabbaths in hearing discourses relative to the peculiar duties of their sex. . . . Females should be conversant with those studies, which will lead them to understand the operations of the human mind. . . . Natural philosophy has not often been taught to our sex. Yet why should we be kept in ignorance of the great machinery of nature, and left to the vulgar notion, that nothing is curious but what deviates from her common course? . . . A knowledge of natural philosophy is calculated to heighten the moral taste, by bringing to view the majesty and beauty of order and design; and to enliven piety, by enabling the mind more clearly to perceive, throughout the manifold works of God, that wisdom, in which he hath made them all. . . . In some of the sciences proper for our sex, the books, written for the other, would need alteration; because, in some they presuppose more knowledge than female pupils would possess. . . . There would likewise be needed some works, which I believe are no where extant, such as a systematic treatise on housewifery. . . . Domestic instruction should be considered important in a female seminary. . . . This plan would afford a healthy exercise. . . . Housewifery might be greatly improved, by being taught, not only in practice, but in theory. . . . The Ornamental branches, which I should recommend for a female seminary, are drawing and painting, elegant penmanship, music, and the grace of motion. . . . Let dancing be practised every day, by youth of the same sex, without change of place, dress, or company, and under the eye of those, whom they are

accustomed to obey, and it would excite no more emotion, than any other exercise or amusement. . . .”

Male students of the classics were not slow to lampoon Mrs. Willard's ideas with unpaid advertisements: “The subscriber informs the public that she is about to open an Academy for the education of YOUNG LADIES in the useful, though unfashionable art of HOUSEWIFERY. She is fully aware of the sneers and frowns that must be borne from those ladies who have attended to the more refined branches of what they call a polished and polite education, but at the same time tenders her services to those who have already learnt embroidery, fillagree, rhetoric, and dancing, together with what are denominated the fine arts, have been educated by imported teachers at enormous expense and after all ‘caunt milk a coo’: as to those who have had only a vulgar education, a common country school affords. She is also sensible of the little attention a vacant advertisement excites, wherein one branch only is proposed to be taught; but at the same time informs them that her one branch has in it many ramifications which afford a pleasing variety, of which the following is a list, viz. Spinning, Weaving, Knitting, Darning, Sewing, Bleaching, washing, starching and folding, cutting and making up shirts for both sexes, milking, making butter and cheese, white and brown bread, most kinds of pies, tarts, custards, and jellies, pancakes and slapjacks, boiling, codling, roasting, broiling, frying, fricasseeing, alamonding and smothering all kinds of flesh and fish with the construction of other necessary sauces and gravies. Ragouts, from the

luscious haggis down to the simple shin of beef, turtle and rat soups inclusive, salting beef and pork, making sausages, pickling and preserving in general, drying apples, curing tobacco and dyeing blue, with an introduction to the nature of roots and herbs. She flatters herself, though she does not pretend to teach the Belles letters and all the elegant accomplishments that can adorn a young lady—but only such as are useful and necessary.”

In spite of such tirades Mrs. Willard's dictum was accepted—officially accepted in New York State—and even after she went on to Waterford and Troy, the Ladies' Academy long continued at Middlebury under new preceptresses. Intermittently there were as many as three competing schools for women: the Middlebury Female Academy with instruction in French, Latin, Astronomy, Logic, Painting and Map drawing for “young ladies who design to qualify themselves for teachers (\$24 a quarter, Country produce and household furniture taken in payment for board)”; Eliza Page's School for Young Ladies established in Gamaliel Painter's home, where one was taught “all the useful and ornamental branches” including Ancient and Modern Geography, Grammar, Arithmetic, Writing, History, Rhetoric, Composition, Natural and Moral Philosophy, Astronomy, Chemistry and Logic (\$3 per quarter. Drawing, Painting, Embroidery and French \$4.50. Lessons in Pianoforte \$9); and Deere's Young Ladies and Gentlemen School, offering all the usual preparatory and academic subjects plus Orthography, Botany, Bookkeeping, Surveying and Map projecting.

The townsfolk were so thoroughly imbued with the

idea of giving and getting education that they were ready to try any experiment. Education for all was a necessary ingredient of democracy: "To preserve a government in the hands of the people," Great Great Grandfather argued, "it is necessary that not only a few of the wealthy, but the great body of the people should be well educated; throwing the learning into the hands of a few is most fatal to a free state, as it amply furnishes them with the means of obtaining all the wealth and power and reducing the ignorant multitude to a state of servility."

America offered a new kind of experiment in democratic government, democratic living, democratic education. All of these could stand an inoculation of the adventurous spirit. There were no hidebound traditions to live up to. Everything was on probation. Middlebury, like every other democratic town, wished to have a share in the sport.

The first evening school was one in penmanship—not ordinary handwriting, but penmanship as a graphic art. "An elegant and useful hand can be acquired in thirty lessons," advertised Luther Jacobson. "Six trial lessons. To gratify the curious and ingenious scholar, he will give lessons at convenient hours in the ornamental branches, viz. German and Square text, Chancery and Italian hands, Saxon and printing."

One successful school inevitably brought on competition, and Stephen West shortly arrived to teach Roman and Italic print, Old English, "Engrossing Secretary's, stenography and shorthand—peculiarly advantageous to gentlemen of the Bar and the learned profes-



sions." Great Great Grandfather's old ledgers and diaries give eloquent evidence that Mr. Jacobson, Mr. West, and a long list of other writing teachers did not teach in vain.

Music schools of every kind and specialty were almost as common as those of handwriting. They ranged from 1804 instruction in "The Rudiments of Psalmody" and "The Art of Singing Sacred Poetry" to a complete Musical Institute of 1840, run by I. T. Packard, "Pestalozzian instructor of vocal music as taught in the Boston Academy," and Mr. Mann, another "professional and scientific musician." Together they gave courses in instrumental and vocal music, juvenile instruction in the first principles of music "for children from three upwards," harmony and composition, and voice cultivation. At the same time Mr. Mann conducted a male orchestra and gave concerts about the State. Women with time to spare could gather at Mr. Woodman's Studio and test their soprano and alto on "beautiful airs, duets and trios."

Even lawyers felt the urge to pass on their learning. Nathaniel Chipman, charter trustee of the College, Vermont Senator, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, author and professor of law for nearly thirty years, somehow found time to give birth to a Law School in 1817, arguing that "Few places could be better calculated for such a seminary than Middlebury. Its numerous literary, scientific and political advantages, the moral state of society, and the economy which can be exercised in prosecuting a course of legal education eminently points it

out as a local situation, highly calculated for the prosperity of a Law Seminary."

French Schools, a Chemistry School, a Medical School, and a Lace School were among the other educational innovations which all had trials at Middlebury. Professor Meilleur offered "elementary principles of the French Language, the etymology of words and Accentuation *viva voce*." Mr. Hamilton followed Meilleur "with an entirely new method of communicating the language." Dr. Mead advertised to the public that since his Chemical lectures were "already prepared, his patients may be assured of faithful and punctual attendance." Mrs. Bulch pledged to her clientele that in "three or four weeks attention" her students could secure "as complete a knowledge of the work on silk, linen, and bobbinet lace as can be found in the greatest variety of imported lace." Dr. Allen's reputation as a physician and surgeon spoke for itself; he needed only to tuck into his advertisement: "Doctor Allen has recently opened a Medical School in this Village. Peculiar attention will be paid to Young Gentlemen preparing for the Medical profession."

Democratic schooling was carried even into negro education when Great Great Grandmother and the Middlebury Anti-Slavery Society, "operating to improve people of color," discovered that most of sixty Africans in the vicinity were unable to read and write and that a large proportion of them were in "a very degraded and unpleasant situation." Immediately a school was inaugurated. The "Females" met every Friday evening for reading and religious instruction, and young-

sters five to ten met "one day in seven" for a term of sixteen weeks.

Middlebury was among the first towns to realize that the apprentice system didn't lend itself to bigger and better trade in the long run and began clamoring for a trade school as early as 1829. "A laudable anxiety is beginning to be felt among master mechanics to raise the skill and character among their own body: particularly to bring about some organized operations for the improvement in education and in the sciences connected with their business, of apprentices. Of the great utility to young men of brief courses of scientific Lectures, and of meetings for reading and discussion, there can be no doubt. And of the auspicious influence upon the craft and community of some organized attempts at improvement, and some system of united action by masters, there can be as little question."

Great Great Grandfather realized the danger to democracy in copying European education "designed for the families of the nobility and gentry." He maintained that "it is infinitely better to rear up plain sensible, well-moralized men and women, fraught with the maxims of prudence and qualified to act their parts usefully in society." It never occurred to him that there was a line to be drawn between liberal and utilitarian education.



## *THEIR MEDICINE*

**A**LL things considered, Middlebury was as good a town as any in which to have the measles, the gout, or a baby. After Dr. Willard first set up practice in 1787, Middlebury was never without at least one respectable physician, and frequently as many as half a dozen. Their training was the superior New England product of Dartmouth, Castleton, Woodstock, Berkshire, Middlebury; medicine as a profession was still in the process of being lifted from the category of ton-sorial artistry. A half-dozen volumes was a very decent private medical library—and no great matter if the volumes were a century or two old. Thomas Sydenham's eighteenth century volumes were still classic. Here a medical student could learn in detail just how air is productive of diseases, how autumn "enriches the blood and

thickens the juices," that "scorbutic rheumatism seldom proceeds from taking bark, that small beer was not improper for fevers but ought to be prohibited in a case of smallpox attended with looseness."

Correct knowledge of bleeding was one of the first essentials of good practicionery. It was granted that bleeding was "hurtful when the blood is weak," that it is borne best by old people. If a person had to be vomited as well as bled, the bleeding should come first. For treatment of measles blood letting was just as safe among children as adults. However, it was not to be employed *repeatedly* for fever of the years, malignant pleurisy (once was sufficient), inveterate rheumatism, or plague. All practitioners were general and a good doctor was expected to be able to bleed, operate, and administer fever potions with equal facility.

If a physician were unsuccessful in diagnosing a malady accompanied by a fever, he simply labeled it a special brand of fever and let it go at that; there was a whole nomenclature of fevers to fall back on: mixed fever, nervous fever, inflammatory fever, hectic fever, pestilential fever. And each had an individual treatment ranging from copious bleeding and sweating to three-day fasts.

It was not a question of professional integrity. Doctors as a rule were as honest a lot as could be found in any trade and Great Great Grandfather never questioned the good intentions of Drs. Willard, Allen, Bass, and colleagues. He didn't notice that there was no stethoscope, no rubber syringe, nor clinical thermometer in their thin satchels. His trust in them was implicit, and

he was perfectly willing that religion should carry on from the point where their knowledge left off. The human body was the instrument of God and He hadn't intended that all its secrets be revealed to mankind. So his children's bloody noses were treated with "an opiate of syrup of white poppies," their dentitious fevers with four drops of hartshorn in black cherry water, whooping cough with bleeding and lenient purgations. Their burns were sopped with wine, their dog bites bathed with a mixture of "highly rectified spirit of wine and Venician treacle," and inflamed eyes with a concoction made up of distilled waters of plantain, roses, frog's spawn, and powdered tutty.

When an epidemic of the measles arrived in town, Great Great Grandmother took Dr. Bass's prescription and prepared it without doubt or inquiry: "Take of the pectoral decoction, a pint and half; syrup of violets and maiden hair, each an ounce and half; mix them together for an apozem, and let three or four ounces of it be taken three or four times a day. Take of oil of sweet almonds, two ounces; syrup of violets and maiden hair, each an ounce; white sugar candy, enough to make them into a linctus, to be taken often in a small quantity, especially when the cough is troublesome. Take of black cherry water, three ounces; syrup of white poppies, an ounce: mix them together for a draught, to be taken every night the distemper throughout."

How much she had to be thankful for in Middlebury medical treatment was brought home to her every time she received a letter from some distressed friend, narrating family illnesses in less settled country:

"Just at night I went to him as he lay on the bed and found he had a high fever and seemed to be much distressed. We sent immediately for a man who had let blood but it was so late, he could not come that night. Next morning he came but could not make him bleed any although we tried every way that could be thought of. I suppose his blood was stagnated. Then we tried to vomit him . . . but to no purpose. . . .

"It rained very hard all the forenoon on Monday but Holland and George looked all the afternoon and all day on Tuesday, and a man with them, for the horse to go after Dr. Moseley; there being no doctor nearer. They expected every minute to find the horse but could not and was not found in 12 weeks and we suppose he was not more than three miles off all that time by the looks of the ground. On Wednesday Holland borrowed a horse but could not find that until noon. He had to buy corn and go to mill and could not get back till Thursday night. Dr. Moseley was sick and not able to come but sent all sorts of medicine that he thought was proper, but Alas! it was too late. He could not take them.

". . . The last two days and nights he scarcely shut his eyes and was a good deal delirious. In the fore part of the week I put on a blister on his arm. It was an old plaister that his Dadda had used, and soaked his feet in warm water every night and morning as long as his strength would allow and put the most drawing things on his feet that we could get. . . . I put on another blister plaister before light on his throat and it did seem to relieve him a little while but his distress soon returned and another large blister on his stomach about noon on Friday.

"After we perceived he was dying I told him we thought so and if he desired the Deacon to pray that God should be gracious to his Soul to squeeze my hand. I put mine into his and he seem'd to squeeze it with all his strength. That was a little before day. He talked a great deal after that but

we could not understand anything he said. . . . He died on Saturday morning about nine. . . . The stroke was very heavy but the punishment no greater than God saw we needed. . . .”

Until the Vermont Medical Society was organized in 1802, anyone with the price of a shingle and a satchel could set up a doctor's office. And plenty of impostors did, but the Society made short work of them. For the first time, a group of reputable medical men assembled in Rutland, decreed that hereafter would-be doctors, in order to be placed on the approved list, would have to pass an examination and “no person shall be admitted for examination until such time as he has spent three years in the study of Physic and Surgery with some regular Practitioner, unless he has had a liberal education, in which case two years only will be required.” Censors were elected as well as a committee and collector to receive donations; and at periodic exhibitions, candidates were more or less publicly examined and approved.

The formation of the Society by no means meant that it could take the law in its own hands. It was the Selectmen—not the physicians—who *authorized* in 1820 a meeting at New Haven “to witness the result of an experiment . . . for the purpose of convincing every person in this vicinity, who still entertains doubts on the subject, of the entire efficacy of Vaccination in saving the human system from the infection of Smallpox.” And it was medicine versus law that same year when a doctor “caused premature labor at the seventh month because of repeated attacks of fevers and waning strength of the



mother." It took weeks of airing in the newspapers to vindicate the physician, who incidentally saved both mother and child. Any change from traditional practice inevitably brought a storm of disapproval from the countryside.

Great operations even in Europe were front-page news, presented not necessarily for commendation but for comment. When word arrived that a London surgeon, operating on cancer, was "obliged to lay the ribs bare, to saw away two to detach them from the plura and cut away all the cancerous part of the membrane," the news was branded as the most surprising operation ever undertaken. "The surgeon could actually touch and see the heart through the pericardium."

But the chief reason for interest in medical progress at Middlebury was aroused by the College and Dr. Allen's school. This institution, located on a lonely stretch of road south of town, differed little from the usual private apprentice houses. Ordinarily a doctor became a doctor by watching the master, dipping into his library, holding the basins, occasionally scrubbing the instruments, and taking care of his horse. In 1822 Jonathan A. Allen put his translation of the idea on an institutional basis in the form of a summer school which opened in April and ran through till autumn. For twenty-five dollars one could receive instruction in medical botany, chemistry, and "micrology"; there were daily recitations in "the several branches of medical science" and students were free to use Dr. Allen's library and "anatomical preparations." The College co-operated by opening its scant library to

the prospective doctors and even granted permission to audit philosophical lectures on the campus. About that time one John Meilleur arrived in town and began offering instruction in French, so French was added (six dollars extra) to the curriculum, and Professor Patton, not to be outdone by his colleague in French, offered to take on medical students in German. It was a makeshift organization, but taken altogether made an exceptionally good school, especially with Dr. Allen's wide New England reputation as a distinguished physician and surgeon to buoy it up.

Dr. Allen agreed with Sydenham: "Surgeons ought to understand anatomy, that they may more surely avoid those vessels or parts in their operations, which cannot be hurt without destroying the patient. Neither can they reduce dislocated bones to their natural situation, without a careful examination, and thorough knowledge of the position of the bones in a human skeleton.

"Such a knowledge of the human body, therefore, is so absolutely necessary, that whoever wants it will treat diseases hoodwinked. Besides, this science may be acquired without much trouble, and in a short time; or it may be sooner learnt than other more difficult matters by persons of no great acuteness, by inspecting the human body. . . ."

But Dr. Allen prospered not without suspicion from Great Great Grandmother and her societies for the suppression of various vices. It was rumored that he entertained in his house dead corpses which he explored on dark nights with his disciples. A native never walked by

his home after dark unaccompanied if he could help it and the Knowing inevitably whipped their horses into a gallop on approaching this hall of science.

Castleton was thirty miles south and the distance lent greater enchantment to Middlebury's medical offspring there; Middlebury philanthropists had contributed practically every penny that went into its own campus and when the College began to parent the Vermont Academy of Medicine at Castleton in 1820, the citizens could well claim part possession. Ever since 1810 the College trustees had been trying to start a medical school: they had endeavored to bait Nathan Smith, the most famous teacher of Medicine in New England, away from Dartmouth; on paper a department of Medicine had been established and even a classroom provided. But Dr. Smith had failed them and so had the whole idea. Castleton at last was something to be proud of.

Every modern architectural idea in other medical schools had been transplanted here. On the first floor was a spacious lecture room with ascending seats, a chemical laboratory, and a study and library room, supplied with volumes owned by the professors. On the second story was a small room devoted to dissecting and another used as an anatomical museum with various minerals and irrelevant natural curiosities. But the outstanding feature of this floor and indeed of the whole building was the "anatomical theatre and lecture room."

Seats were arranged in concentric circles, rising gradually one above the other, and in the center, directly beneath the skylight, was a revolving board. On this was

to be seen during any lecture a partially dissected subject. Slowly a professor marched around this stand, rotating the body before him, occasionally halting, then again walking, all the time talking and explaining some feature of the human system, slowly dissecting an arm to reveal the muscle layers, or gradually exposing a thorax interior. To popularize the school, the administration advertised: "Those departments which are strictly professional will be conducted with a particular view to the ready access of the mind; *alternately calling it to the fatiguing and the amusing parts of the course.*"

After Middlebury tucked the Castleton Medical Academy under its academic wing it built up during the following half-decade the largest and one of the best equipped medical schools in New England. And the scholarly or the morbid had the privilege of coming to the College Chapel at Commencement time to hear the dissertations read and defended—dissertations on such subjects as Purgative Medicine, Scrofula, Use of Cold Water in Febrile Diseases, Effects of Abstemious Regimen, Insanity, Chimaphila or Pyrola Umbellata, Principles of Physiology and Puerperal Fever.

But even the medical schools and the State Medical Association couldn't begin to compete with the catalogues of patent medicine: Dr. Relfe's Botanical Drops (cure for scurvy, scrofula, St. Anthony's fire, leprosy, pimples, enlarged glands, sore legs, ulcers, venereal taints—best spring and autumnal physic); Hull's Patent Hinge Truss (self adjusting); Chemical Embrocation or the Liquid Improved Opodeldoc (good for gout, rheu-

matism, bruises, sprains, cramp, numbness, stiffness, weakness of the joints, burns, scalds, chilblains); Dr. Phelp's Tomato Pills (radical cure for anything from acid stomach to swellings and "gravel"); Jew David's Plaster—from Palestine (marvelous cure for King's evil, animal fiber, local inflammation, and all the other ills of mankind); Itch Ointments patented by the dozen; Tinctures and Essences by the dozen; Bilious and Anti-bilious preparations by the score, such as Dr. Lee's Genuine Windam Bilious Pills and Dr. Rawson's Genuine Anti-Bilious pills (for indigestion, debility, headache, swooning, dizziness, fainting, tremblings, lowness of spirit, costiveness, diarrhoeas, jaundice, gravel, worms, female complaints and rheumatism—50 cents a box).

Great Great Grandmother kept a corner cupboard filled with them in spite of Dr. Bass's derogations and an occasional newspaper assault: "Among the varied and multifarious impositions palmed upon the public, at the present day, I believe there is no species more productive of prejudicial consequences than that of Nostrums and Patent Medicines. On investigation, they will generally be found to be heterogeneous masses, jumbled together by some ignorant quack; or, which is oftener the case, devised or rather composed of one or two common and very simple ingredients by some artful deceiver who conceals them by various combinations and cloaks them under an imposing name thinking it easier to make a fortune in that way than by an honest industry."

Small-town support of quackery was sufficient so that one-night-stand transients like Dr. Samuel Thompson of Boston could set up a temporary office at Middlebury

in competition with orthodox practice and express a readiness to "attend those who wish to be benefited by his medicine and advice on his Botanical System and Medical Electricity, and inform patients on how they may become their own physicians." When the Medical Academy seemed to be proving itself slow at conquering cancer, the quacks took up the challenge, one Dr. Burr Hull offering a particularly efficacious and secret cure: "This remedy does not act like a caustic by destroying the parts to which it is applied, but on the contrary it separates the diseased from the sound parts, and the cancerous portion can after be preserved entire, and the pain attending the operation is generally but trifling."

Great Great Grandmother's friends furthered the specific business by investing and passing around among themselves ingenious cures for strong constitutions: "To cure a sore throat occasioned by cold, Sun Flower seeds chewed and their juice or mucilage swallowed will be found effectual." Or there was a home cure for cancer, in which the sufferer was advised to boil olive oil in a copper vessel, *newly tinned on inside*, until the oil is the consistency of ointment; the affected part was to be rubbed for fourteen consecutive days with the combination. And a popular specific for dog bite "never known to fail" was red chickweed, which when ripe or in full bloom is gathered and dried in the shade, reduced to a powder and "eaten on bread with butter, honey or molasses."

Other departments of medicine were on about the same level as this household materia medica. When

Great Great Grandfather's eyesight began to bother him he merely went through the formality of visiting a hardware store and having one of the clerks fit him to proper spectacles over the counter, or if a person lived out of town and couldn't readily get in to the shopping district he tried to find a piece of glass "that nearly suits, describing as accurately as possible at what distance from the eyes the sight is most perfect with the specimen," and sent it into the hardware store to be matched. Youngsters with weak eyes didn't need to bother with a sample—just explain that their eyes were weak; and oldsters who couldn't find the proper piece of glass or old lens could be fitted by mail if they would explain "the distance of most perfect sight with the naked eye."

Mail order treatment for ailments more complicated than poor eyesight was not uncommon. A doctor fifty miles from Middlebury did not hesitate to prescribe for one of Great Great Grandfather's neighbors who was suffering from a combination of pain in the arm, disorder of the liver, and a paralytic shock in the head: "Palliating or nicely comforting or alleviating medicine for the present would do no good. It is necessary to begin at the foundation, destroy the root and the branches will perish. The first remedy is bleeding in the side of the temple by leeches . . . or in the arm of that side, unless it reduces you too much. . . . In the next place take a blue, mercurial pill every night . . . and a moderate dose of Epsom-salts every morning. . . . In the third place a tablespoonful of Balsom of Pine made up of mucilage of gum Arabic, three ounces, Spirits Turpentine, two drams, oil of cloves, six drops, well shook to-

gether, then add loaf sugar 6 drams and water three ounces. . . . Electricity is useless in your case."

Dentistry shared a position similar to optics. Until 1839, when Dr. Harris set up shop (near the marble factory), there was no resident dentist in Middlebury. Cavities and sore jaws were taken care of by transient tool kits, and if Great Great Grandfather's bicuspid began acting up about Christmas time, he could rest assured that someone would be along to patch it up by the first of July.

The arrival of the dentist was heralded by advance notices in the paper: "D. Rosseter, Surgeon Dentist from New York respectfully informs the Ladies and Gentlemen of Middlebury and its vicinity that he will arrive at Case's Tavern the 2nd of July and will be happy to attend to such applications as may be made for his professional assistance. Those persons who have unfortunately lost their Front Teeth and are desirous to have them replaced, have now a favorable opportunity. It is unnecessary to say anything of the great deformity and inconvenience attending the loss. His operation is seldom attended with any pain whatever. He arrests the decay of those teeth partly rotten. That adventitious matter called tartar is easily removed. He regulates children's teeth and officiates in every branch of the profession. Ladies will be attended at their homes who request it."

Simon Natten (lately of Germany) made his headquarters at Nixon's Tavern and seasonally offered competition to Mr. Rosseter, but in addition to Rosseter's treatment, Natten offered "professional aid in any dis-



ease of the mouth and gums," and could set "natural and artificial teeth with ligatures, springs, pivots, or on plates of gold, and in such a manner as to be useful and highly ornamental"; he could "orify" and "plug" teeth with tenderness and care, guarantee beauty and elegance in the finishing and give advice with "the most implicit candor." Incidentally he sold tooth powder at a dollar a box; and at two dollars, a bottle of liquid guaranteed to fasten loose teeth into the jaws.

The cheapest way out of any dental difficulty was to have the tooth pulled. A fair price for the operation was twelve and a half cents. But that was quite in keeping with other medical fees. Great Great Grandfather expected to pay fifty cents for a doctor's visit, plus eight cents a mile for traveling fee. For two dollars and a half the doctor would spend a whole day at his bedside. He was satisfied that the attention was worth the price.



## THEIR READING

SHAKESPEARE was only a name to Great Great Grandfather, so the essential family library consisted of only two pieces of literature: an almanac and the Bible. The Bible was perused as a document rather than literature; as a duty, a comfort, and stimulant—not for enjoyment. It was under the head of religion rather than reading. The almanac really came first, for it was indispensable household furniture, no less necessary than a clock. Living was scaled to the passing of days, weeks, months, so the almanac was the real timepiece. It hung from the mantel on a piece of red cord and contained all the information necessary to one's getting about in an uncomplicated, unsophisticated community.

If the household lost track of what day it was, the matter could be checked approximately with the alma-

nac. The calendar gave the risings and settings of the moon, the holidays, and weather predictions in such vague terms as "Cold blustery winds," "Pleasant for the season and cool breezes, thundershowers and high winds in many places and perhaps hail," "Frosty night and warm day," "Expect rain and catching weather," "A very growing season and more thunder and lightening."

Indispensable was the explanation of "The Equation of Time" or "The Sun slow clock and the Sun fast clock." The rest of the volume was made up of such material as a list of state courts and their time of meeting, an Interest table compiled at six percent, tables showing the relative value of federal, state, and foreign currencies, hints on agriculture and home economics, valuable recipes and cures. There were anecdotes which Great Great Grandfather could quote and laugh about for twelve consecutive months—harmless jokes with just enough edge to make the ladies flutter:

"A Countryman reading the Bible to his wife, where it is stated that Solomon had three hundred wives and seven hundred concubines, the good woman, in a tone of surprise, said she was sure he did not read it right, and insisted upon looking at the passage herself; when having conn'd it over two or three times, and satisfied that it was so, she looked up in his face, and chucking him gently under the chin, exclaimed, 'Eb! what a simple Solomon wouldst thou make!'"

There was at least one good entry for the tavern crowd:

"A heavy complaint has been made against the authors of modern romances, full of ghosts, spectres, and murder-

ers—The young ladies are so frightened as to be afraid to sleep alone.”

And there had to be a few entries on the perennial inebriate:

“Two Blades came home late from a grog shop, one night, and went to bed; one of them, by drinking a little too deep, had got a vertigo, or swimming head, and fancying the bed whirled over and over, tumbled out on the floor and lay still. His bed-fellow hearing nothing of him for some time, calls out, ‘Jemmy, and why don’t you come to bed?’ ‘Faith, Paddy,’ says he, ‘let it come round again, and then I’ll try.’ ”

The almanac had to have a message here and there to make it entirely proper for the consumption of church dignitaries. To justify itself to the pastor and the quilting clubs, the almanac necessarily sounded a catechetic note here and there:

Q. What is the comforter?

A. Rum.

Q. Into what state will the love of rum, and a perseverance in the use of it, bring mankind?

A. The love of rum, and a perseverance in the use of it, will bring mankind into a drunken state.

Q. Wherein consisteth a drunkard’s exaltation?

A. A drunkard’s exaltation consisteth in the prostration of dignity and in a hussa to a merry life!—Heio! he-up! heio! “Pash about the bowl, boys!”

Q. Wherein consisteth a drunkard’s humiliation?

A. A drunkard’s humiliation consisteth in his being senseless, and that in a low condition, lying under the table, rolling in the dirt, and wallowing in the uncleanness: Then follow pain, loss of appetite, trembling hands, idleness, in-

attention to business, poverty, want and distress; friends neglect him, diseases torment him, creditors tease him, executions vex him, sheriffs seize him, and the prison opens its doors to take him in.—Surely it is an EVIL WAY, and the end thereof is SORROW!

The almanac was read and reread, thumbed and re-thumbed until a new one had to be substituted for the dog-ears by the end of December. There was always something new and refreshing to find in it. It served to promote conversation on the weather—which never agreed with the prediction. Even the hired man could sit down on the doorstep after a corn beef and cabbage dinner and spell out the essence of a slippery joke or puzzle over the signs of the zodiac.

“The more men that can be made to think, the better,” counseled a newspaper contributor of 1802; “books have the tendency, but they are scarce. All the lazy, and almost all the busy neglect them, because it is a task . . . but everybody reads the almanac. It is the poor man’s library. . . . A newspaper is cheap, of small bulk and goes everywhere—besides it is a treat which always creates an appetite, for curiosity is sauce to it. It is a kind of standard dish. It tells us facts at the minute we are curious to know them. . . . The public is addressed as a town meeting.”

Everyone knew the neighborhood gossip, thanks to the pulpit, the picket fence, and the eager tendrils of a grapevine, so the Middlebury press—this town meeting moderated by the local printer—didn’t feel that it was called upon to duplicate these institutions. Death, destruction, and College commencements were the only

local current events considered worth recording consistently. That left over two pages for national and international events, and about a page for moral essays, notes on agriculture, poetry, and general feature material.

The press felt its burden of responsibility. It was free—very recently granted special dispensation in the Bill of Rights. The Publisher and Great Great Grandfather agreed “that the press in a free government ought to be left in a great measure unrestrained; at least that it should not be subject to the control of a ruling party.” The *Middlebury Mercury* worded its first prospectus accordingly:

“The editors will endeavor to obtain early and correct information of every important transaction, and communicate it to the public in a candid and impartial manner. Ingenious political discussions, which tend to enlighten the public mind, and give the citizens just ideas of their rights, will be gratefully received, and published with pleasure.

“. . . The editors will relate facts as they occur, and publish such dissertations only as have a tendency to diffuse useful information. . . .

Joseph D. Huntington

John Fitch                      Editors

“Advertisements will be inserted on reasonable terms, but will not be suffered to multiply so as to interfere with the principal object of the Paper.”

Messrs. Huntington and Fitch didn’t commit themselves to furnishing current news. “Early” was the only word they used to differentiate between history and the information they supplied. The most recent foreign

news was weeks late. News of the surrender of Alexandria, for instance, in 1801 came through exactly eight weeks after the event, the Peace with the Turks nine weeks, the Treaty of Peace between the French Republic and the Kingdom of Portugal, ten weeks. A day by day diary of congressional activities was published from ten days to three weeks late, depending on the weather and coach service between Middlebury and Washington.

Any means of collecting news was acceptable publisher's cricket: private letters, a coachman's say-so, a traveling salesman's eyewitness account. Details of how the story came through were every bit as exciting as the item itself.

"A passenger in Yesterday's stage, brought in a New York Evening Post of Saturday last, containing many of the particulars of the capture of Washington by the British. While this passenger was at dinner, we were permitted to copy the following articles. What man, among those so clamorous for war in 1812, entertained the most distant thought that, in little more than two years from its declaration, the Capital of the U.S. would be in the hands of the enemy, Yet such is the melancholy fact—a fact that will remain an eternal monument of the madness and folly of our rulers. What will the world, what will posterity say, in view of the policy—the infamy and baseness of which there is not an epithet in our language strong enough to characterize—a policy that drew off our regular and efficient troops to perish by thousands in unavailing efforts upon unoffending Canada—while our extensive Atlantic Frontier is left defenceless and deserted! By the spirit of the immortal Washington! Have Americans indeed become slaves, that they will still continue to support a miserable Administra-

tion who look upon the misfortunes of a Country they are sinking into the gulph of ruin with an indifference that would disgrace a Nero or a Caligula?"

There was small chance of Great Great Grandfather's picking up much information from headlines. He had to read the news story—read it clear to its end to uncover the essential facts. Fifty-cent superlatives were all that copywriters would offer by way of enticement:

Latest and Most Important Intelligence

Latest and Fatal Intelligence

Latest from Europe—Highly Interesting

Important European Intelligence (By the arrival of the Ranger, Captain Chamberlain, at Baltimore, in a short passage from London)

Highly Important War Operations

Disagreeable News

Violent Storm

Disastrous Shipwreck

Dreadful Catastrophe (an explosion in Malta eight weeks old)

Fatal Catastrophe

Flagrant Outrage

Shocking Murder

Confidential!!!

Great News

Great News! Great News!

Glorious News!

"We stop the press to announce the glorious news which we have just received from a passenger who arrived by the opposition line of stages from Albany, that the House of Representatives on the 9th instant elected the Hon. John Q. Adams, President of the United States for four years from the 4th of March next, by the first ballot."



But Great Great Grandfather found few of these scary superlatives in any one issue. The bulk of the columns were given over to the sober reflections written and set by hand at leisure and soberly headlined: "Religion in France," "Naturalization Bill," "Russia," "Duelling," "He Cuts a Figure," a satirical essay on gentlemen, "Letters from a Hindu Philosopher," "Comparison Between the Sexes," "Boston," "Life and Character of Benedict Arnold," "Slavery at St. Domingo." Copyright laws imposed no deterrent, so fifty percent of the articles were filched from other journals.

Since agricultural magazines offered little if any competition, the editor had a virtually untouched field to cover in the subject of farming. Most important of all agricultural topics was fertilizer; there were frequent and frank discussions about "Making and Manufacturing Manure" or "Increasing the Manure from Swine." Catchy anecdotes and pleasant observations arrived at the printing office fresh from the hay field or the barnyard: "It is a curious fact in the history of animals that the nastiest are the most long-lived. The swine which is among the dirtiest of all creatures will live twenty-five years, whereas the sheep, which is a very neat animal, will live only ten years."

The editor could supply some angle to every phase of farming. For Great Great Grandmother there were directions for preserving turnips from insects, directions for identifying pernicious weeds, or for raising cabbage, an academic debate on the advantages of sowing peas in circles instead of in straight rows. Great Great Grandfather could learn all there was to know about pruning

pear trees, what plums would withstand a Vermont winter, or the methods of making apple brandy. The dairyman and shepherd read about Flemish Husbandry, proper fencing of horses and cows, dangers of close cropping of grass in early spring, control of ticks on sheep, the advantages of milking cows three times a day, and the curing of hay with salt.

The poetry column was largely pirated from English contemporaries, but there were plenty of local sentimental philosophers to turn out rhymes on any subject, no matter how didactic, mundane, or fanciful. Nature, treated under such titles as "An Elegant Description of Spring," played a close second to Love, Wives and Sweethearts. These paraded under inspired captions, such as "The Properties of a Good Wife," "The First Pair," "Pleasure and Hope," "Choice of a Wife," or "The Girl I Left Behind Me."

The ordinary subscription price for a Middlebury weekly was a dollar and a half, and it was well worth it, but since most subscriptions were paid in old rags, fire wood, vegetables, or goose feathers, the publisher usually went broke in less than a decade. The title of the newspaper carried no more value than its capital; when one sheet passed out of the picture its name went with it. Great Great Grandfather learned to date historical events by the paper they appeared in: *Mercury*, *Mirror*, *Patriot*, *Standard*, *Herald*, *Messenger*, *Reporter*, *American*, *Republican*, *Free Press*, and *Argus*. Ordinarily his subscription was delivered rather than mailed. Out of town copies were carried by the post rider or coachman who was given a concession in his territory, but it was

he who carried the accounts too, not the newspaper. If subscriptions weren't paid in advance the annual charge was twenty-five cents extra and the publisher frequently had to run a notice that "no papers will be discontinued unless all arrearages are paid." The bill kept mounting as long as the paper was received and the law was on the side of the printer.

Advertisements helped the cause along in a small way. The only national advertisers were medicine patentees and they were the best customers since they paid cash. The merchants in town swapped space for produce:

Benjamin Seymour  
Has For Sale

A very General Assortment of  
HATS

On the most reasonable terms, for  
Cash or Produce

Different kinds of cut-nails for sale at a reasonable rate—Inquire of the subscriber at Mr. Amara Strand's Inn, a few rods north of the College.

Luther Drury

Richard Redfield

Would inform the Public, that he manufactures  
All kinds of

EDGE TOOLS

At his shop opposite the Printing-Office  
Various kinds of Edge tools on the shortest  
notice

## THEIR READING

171

Ep. Jones, and Co.  
at their store north of the College  
have opened

A very general and handsome assortment of  
*Dry Goods*

Hardware, Groceries  
Suitable for all seasons.

The assortment, quality and prices of their goods will bear comparing with those of any store in the State

Tavern keepers who want good liquors, will find them at the above store, and at reduced prices.

They have on hand Gentlemen's English Beaver Hats

An assortment of Paper Hangings

Russia-Iron

German and Crowley-Steel

250 lbs. Salt-Peter

130 Reams of assorted Writing Paper made  
in the year 1800

Wanted

2000 lbs. Clover-Seed

50 bushels Herds-Grass

25 do. Red-Top

Cash paid for Furs

Specie, at all times, exchanged for Lansingburgh and

Troy Farmer's Banknotes.

For Sale

At the Hat-Factory over Mr. Gibson's Store  
at the east end of the Bridge in Middlebury.  
St. Croix Rum, Cider Brandy, Molasses, Tea,

## STAGECOACH NORTH

Loaf Sugar, Coffee, Pepper, Alspice, Grapes, Key and Box Raisins, Plug, Paper and Pigtail tobacco, Copperas, Logwood, Codfish and Glue, Cut Nails, Sewing silks, Shawls, Vestings, Ribbons, etc.

—Also—

A good assortment of Hats  
Benj. Seymour

Farmers did well to follow the stray columns. Cattle during their dry periods, or horses when not in use, were customarily turned to pasture and if they weren't rounded up often enough for salting, the only means of keeping tabs on them was in the newspaper.

"Broke into the enclosure of the subscriber, in the month of June last, a three-year-old brown steer, with some white on the belly and on the inside of his hind legs.

"The owner is desired to prove property, pay charges, and take him away.

Luther Drury"

"Broke into the inclosure of the subscriber, on the 5th day of June inst. a large brown cow with large high horns; giving milk out of but two teats; supposed to be seven or eight years old; no artificial mark on her. The owner is desired to prove property, pay charges and take her away.

David Parkhill"

"Taken up by the Subscriber on the 1st inst. a dark bay Mare, of a middling size hipt on the rear side."

“Strayed from the Subscriber, about the first of June last, an old brown one-ey’d Mare, ball faced, and grey about the head, round back, and crooked leggs—on the whole, very homely. Likewise two yearling colts, one a brown, the other a sorrel, with a white face and some white legs. Whoever has taken up said creatures, shall be handsomely rewarded.”

The difference between newspapers and magazines was largely one of format and emphasis on timely political events. The *Adviser* or *Vermont Evangelical Magazine*, the first monthly to be published at Middlebury (1809), was exactly what its title indicated, and ministers all over the state served as agents and dispensers, doing their best to collect the dollar-a-year subscription. Four years later the *Literary and Philosophical Repertory* put in its appearance, and for a brief period Middlebury had a magazine for intellectuals and scholars. Turning through the pages one could sample such morsels as Modern Paris, Earthquakes of 1811, Bones Necessary for Fowls, Observations on Expansion and Contraction of Water, Meteorological Observations, Lecture on Perpetual Motion.

Most of the popular periodicals, however, were published outside of Middlebury under such titles as *The Casket or Flower of Literature*, *Literary and Miscellaneous Iris*, *Missionary Herald*, *North American Review*, *The Literary Tablet*, the *Philamathesean*, *Green Mountain Repertory*, and *Euterpeiad*, a review of musical works.

The year 1829 brought Great Great Grandmother

the first issues of *Godey's Lady's Book*, with steel engravings, fashion plates, music, and literature. "It is the only magazine in this country," bragged L. A. Godey, "intended for the perusal of Females that is edited by their own sex. This is an important matter and should be borne in mind by those mothers who intend catering for their own or their daughter's instruction and amusement. No article has been admitted in its columns that parents might not with safety read to their children."

Fiction was most decidedly not in the safe class and the reading of novels was considered one of the vices of the day. At least that was what Great Great Grandfather maintained, although he never indulged in reading any himself, but he had heard plenty of clerical denunciations on the subject:

"There is a certain property in novels which fascinates the minds of giddy youths, just as the eyes of a serpent charm an unsuspecting bird. When the serpent, by a gradual approach, has come so near as to accomplish his design, he seizes his helpless prey and instantly devours it. . . . Novels are said to be copied from nature. . . . So gross an impropriety . . . will always excite disgust. Although the writings of Mr. Fielding are remarkable for their simplicity, they are not free from the obscenity which is too common to writings of that kind. Young men who are great novel readers are apt to forsake the substantial pursuits of life for those of a more transitory nature . . . they appear to have nothing more in view than to be esteemed by the other sex . . . their ability is discourse upon novels, dress and fashions and such like *important matters* will determine their reputation for politeness.

"It is then a sufficient condemnation of novels to say that the reading of them is a waste of time—that a vast propor-

tion are silly—some of them are of dubious moral tendency—and not a few decidedly dangerous and immoral.

“Few are worth the trouble of reading: some perhaps do contain a few good morals; but they are not worth the finding, when so much rubbish is intermixed. Their moral parts are like small diamonds among mountains of dirt and trash.”

Nevertheless there was plenty of this dirt and trash in Middlebury. Females of questionable character boasted openly of reading them; college boys hid them under their mattresses. Charles Grandison and Joseph Andrews were as much a part of the vocabulary of the sophisticated as were the circumference of the fashionable skirt hoops or the best varieties of English snuff.

The town bookstores did nothing to discourage this traffic in sentimental fiction. Any addict could drop into Swift's, White's, or Hagar's for a copy of Paley's "Philosophy" and with the greatest nonchalance take away instead the "History of Pamela," "Tom Jones," "The Vicar of Wakefield," or "Baron Munchausen." Some bookstores openly advertised novels; others with more sagacity blended their lists of biography, history, poetry, and fiction in unsuspected rosters:

Blackstone's "Commentaries on the Laws of England"  
Bibles  
Watts's "Psalms and Hymns"  
"History of Charles Grandison"  
"Life of Baron Trenck"  
"A Father's Legacy"  
Perry's Dictionary  
Wood's "History of Adam's Administration"  
"Evelina"



"Robinson Crusoe"  
"Child's Spelling Book"  
"Fatal Effects of the Passions"  
"Don Quixote"  
"Abelard and Héloïse"  
"Devout Exercises of the Heart"  
"Travels of True Godliness"  
"Moral Story Tellers"  
Euclid's "Elements"  
"Trader's Assistant"  
"History of Sanford and Merton"

Even Great Great Grandfather's children were not neglected by the publishing world, and anything from spelling books and children's hymnals to an assortment of moral "toy books" was available. As early as 1802 an anonymous voice of the press was already pleading for juveniles:

"Children should be furnished with various little books suited to their age and understanding. Toy books for children, written in the most simple language and which should ingeniously blend practical instruction with childish amusement, would be deserved to be ranked among the most useful publications. If learned metaphysicians would descend from their balloon-flights among the clouds and employ a small portion of their ingenuity in writing such books, they might improve mankind a thousand times more than by all their cob-web speculations."

Middlebury held a leading place among northern New England book publishers for nearly half a century. To be sure, the great majority of titles was religious: sermons, sacred poems of questionable literary merit, moral tales like "Little Henry and His Bearer,"

"The Twin Sisters," and "Zion's Pilgrim," and dozens of other inspirational pieces that would appropriately have been produced by the American Tract Society: "The Backslider or an Inquiry into the Nature, Symptoms and Effects of Religious Declension," "The Communicant's Spiritual Companion," "Religious Library," "The Christian Instructor Instructed." Nonsecular volumes covered an array of subjects from bees to beer and slide rules to sword exercises.

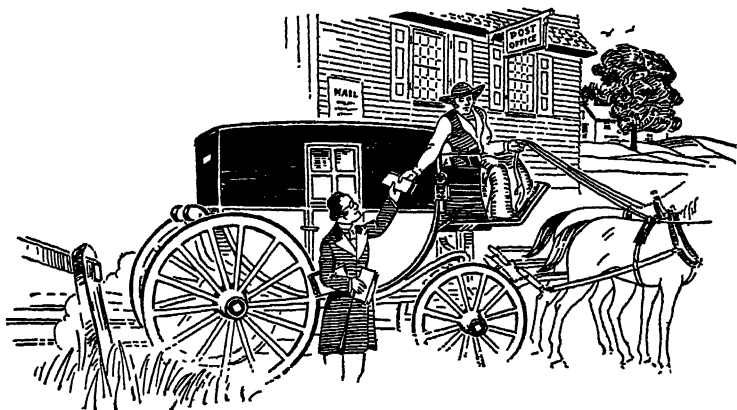
Titles were frequently misleading: "The Youth's Ethereal Directory," which one would expect to be another Sabbath School tract, turned out to be "a course and Familiar Explanation of the Elements of Astronomy," and "The Federal Compendium," "a plain, concise and easy Introduction to Arithmetic designed for use in Common Schools." Copyright laws were lenient enough to permit stealing word for word popular volumes like Thomson's "Seasons" and Goldsmith's "Deserted Village."

Attempts at starting libraries and reading rooms were short-lived, since they depended solely on charity and public interest. The Center Library was the first to perish in 1805 after repeated notices of a proprietors' meeting "to examine the state of the library, to see if they will agree to increase the library or dissolve the society and divide the books, or sell them at auction." In connection with his bookstore, Jonathan Hagar opened a rental collection to the public under the title of Circulating Library. For three dollars a year or thirty-four cents a month one could borrow any of his seven hundred volumes "comprising history, travels, voyages

and the most *approved* novels." Then in the 1830's, the local news office added its bit to Great Great Grandfather's cultural life by starting the first periodical reading room, furnished with over fifty newspapers including three or four dailies "and a reasonable proportion of semi- and tri-weekly papers," but there was a visitor's fee of two dollars a year.

Even the College Library was by no means free; it aimed deliberately at being self-supporting. Each student had to pay rental according to the size of the volume. The tax varied from seven to three cents, depending on whether it were a folio, quarto, octavo, duodecimo, or pamphlet; *carte blanche* privileges cost fifty cents a quarter. And the long list of fines helped to keep the shelves up to date: for neglect in returning a book borrowed from the library, twenty-five cents; "for every spot of ink or grease," two cents; for turning down a leaf, one cent; for tearing off a cover, the price of new binding. A tutor acted as the librarian. No person was permitted to enter the library without him, or take down or put up any book without his express permission.

On the point of giving too much encouragement to reading, Great Great Grandfather was torn between the local academic approach and the scriptural admonition: "Of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh." He wouldn't dispute the value of dipping into Priestley, Blackstone, or Timothy Dwight, but as for reading polite literature and the arts—the dangers of moral corruption were too great.



## *THEIR COMMUNICATION*

**T**HERE were three obstinate enemies to Great Great Grandfather's wagon wheels: mud, mountains, and forest. Champlain Valley was once an enormous lake bottom and thousands of years later it took only a half-hour downpour to turn every lane, path, and turnpike back into approximately the same condition nature left it when the inland ocean receded. It was miry clay of the most persistent and sticky variety, clay that formed stilts on the soles of Great Great Grandfather's boots, balls on the hoofs of his horses, and solid wadding between spokes, rims and axle. This was the terrain over which all roads had to be laid, but first there were forests to be cleared and passes to be found over and around the mountains. Great Great Grandfather did not develop his self-reliance entirely by choice.

The Indians had done a good bit of trail beating before the first settlers took on the job. Even they had despaired of clodding through Champlain Valley and chose to paddle and portage up Otter Creek. Great Great Grandfather sensibly followed the Indian example: the first settlers arrived by log canoe; grain was poled down the creek on rafts to the mills; logs came by water; social calls were made Venetian style; and the first Middlebury funeral procession Great Great Grandfather accompanied was a nautical one. "A raft was made by lashing together two canoes and spreading boards over them; on this the corpse was placed accompanied by the mourners and friends and men to manage the boats. . . . Thus arranged, the procession moved up the creek, and the body was deposited in the burying ground near Col. Chipman's. The boats, on their way, leaked, and the men, having no pails or dishes with them, bailed out the water with their shoes."

Snow and ice were a major boon to traffic. Moving day was deferred until winter, when sleds could be driven on the frozen creek. So road building was postponed for years. To carry on inland communication with the neighbors, Great Great Grandfather followed the circuitous routes of blazed trails through "the terribly dense hemlock forest" that covered the Middlebury region.

When town thoroughfares began to take the place of the blazed trails, the result was still amateur and boggy. With his fellow townsmen, Great Great Grandfather took his turn working off road taxes with pick and

spade. A swath was cut through the forest, stumps removed, brush cleared and overhanging branches trimmed to accommodate horsemen. On side hills, thank-yema'ams were molded to direct floods from a summer deluge and green logs were felled across swamps to be covered thinly with brush and clay. The highway was then left to the public to beat down, rut, and shape. Lines of grass continued to grow in the center. The spring ruts of one team were deepened by the next. Erosion started at once, washing out new ledges and boulders which had to be circumnavigated or bounced over. If a stream bed couldn't conveniently be forded, a log causey was built, similar to the first bridge over the Middlebury falls, where pine trunks connected log abutments and poles were laid across the trunks.

Timothy Dwight, New England Marco Polo, summarized the status of Middlebury roads when he made his first trip through in 1798:

"We left Rutland on Friday morning; and rode to Middlebury, through Pittsford, Brandon, Leicester, and Salisbury: thirty-two miles. The road lies wholly along Otter Creek. It is little wrought, and of course indifferent; and the last part of the distance for about eight miles, was to us dangerous. The soil, here, is clay; and the season had been wet. Wherever the water lies, and particularly wherever a rill crosses the path, it becomes speedily soft, and ultimately a quagmire; the sides of which are perpendicular, like those of a pit. Into these places a horse descends as suddenly as into a crack in a sheet of ice; and exposes both himself and his rider to the most dangerous evils. We left Rutland late in the morning; and were obliged to accom-

plish this part of our journey in the night. The heavens were overcast with clouds; the darkness was early, and intense; and our road passed through a thick forest. . . .”

Not until individual citizens took the matter into their own hands and started turnpike companies did the situation change—and then not appreciably. The first steps for cutting a way through the vast mountain wilderness east of the town were taken on New Year’s Day, 1801, when a group labeling themselves the Center Turnpike Company met to consider the Act of Incorporation just granted by the State Legislature, and to appoint a committee “to view the ground between Middlebury and Woodstock, as far as will be necessary, and lay said road twenty miles, from the Courthouse in Middlebury in a proper direction to Woodstock.”

This “ground between Middlebury and Woodstock” was as rugged a patch of Green Mountain terrain as any New Englanders would care to consider for a pass. The “proper direction to Woodstock” crossed four miles of sticky clay to East Middlebury, then headed abruptly into foothills toward an unnamed gap. Foothills piled on foothills and grew into mountain slopes that would make an expert woodsman breathless. It was a maze of rivers and tributaries, deep precipitous gorges, swamps and thickets. Hardwood timber stood everywhere with three-foot trunks.

The surveyors decided that the only feasible way through to the divide was to follow the banks of the circuitous East Middlebury River. But to avoid the cliffs, dizzily overhanging the gorge, it would be necessary to

cross the river at least twice and build any number of bridges over gullies and tributaries. The divide itself was over two thousand feet in altitude, and from that point east the only possible route literally plunged down the mountain through a wet tangle of virgin forest. Building a thoroughfare seemed a formidable undertaking, yet pioneer perseverance and patience aimed to conquer the slopes. The only direct post road to Boston and southern New England business lay on the east side of the mountain range, so a Middlebury connection with it must be extended.

First, capital had to be secured, and to make the turnpike financially successful all the communities on the route had to be interested in the venture. The very fact that no direct communication existed between these villages served to slow up the process of organization. A stock company was formed, headed inevitably by the Middlebury town father, Gamaliel Painter. Three hundred shares were put on the market at twenty dollars a share; three directors, a treasurer and a clerk were elected, and six percent quarterly dividends were optimistically agreed upon. It took half a decade even to get the road under way and nearly a full decade to put the turnpike in operation, complete with gates, gatehouses, and gatekeepers bonded at five hundred dollars apiece.

But Great Great Grandfather soon discovered that his original twenty dollar purchase of stock was actually only a down payment. As work progressed and new freshets washed away the preliminary efforts, new assessments had to be made on each share: ten dollars,



twenty dollars, fifteen dollars, thirty dollars. Shareholders who couldn't keep up with their assessments were obliged to sell out for what they could get at public auction. In speech and press, outsiders urged on the endeavors and investings of the proprietors with generous understatement:

"Roads in a country are as necessary as veins in a body; and among the happy improvements in our youthful and vigorous country none are more useful than turnpike roads. With ease and safety we travel in them through these rugged districts, which had been nearly impassable—they bring the remote parts of the country, as it were, near to each other; and, while they greatly improve commerce, they equally facilitate social intercourse and the speedy and extensive diffusion of intelligence. . . ."

A thousand dollars went into every mile of the Center Turnpike, and what the proprietors got wasn't worth that. Trees were felled and the worst of the stumps and boulders cleared away, rough bridges were built over streams, but there was no grading, no cutting away. When a road couldn't be built around the side of a precipitous hill, it went over it. The builders were held rigidly to their contract: "all bridges and sluices of good sound green timber or stone, with stone buttments for the bridges, where stone can conveniently be had, the said sluices and water courses to be made at suitable distances from each other to prevent the water from flowing the road, and of sufficient depth and width to carry off the water from the same and permit the said road from being wet and spongy by the water standing at

the sides of said road. All roots and stumps and stones to be removed out of said road so as to prevent the wheels of carriages from striking them in traveling said road and so that they may not be thrown out by the frost to the injury of said road. That the same shall be made of the width contemplated, but in all places and in the open and hard land of such width as shall be convenient and not greatly increasing the expense of making the same, and of such height as shall be thought most beneficial to the road . . . that the same and every part thereof shall be made in such workmanlike and faithful manner as would have been done by any prudent individual owning the whole of said grant and to be kept for his own benefit."

Hardly had the last spike gone into the last causeway when the stagecoach from Boston was wrenched over the pass by four sweating horses. To be sure, the passengers had to walk most of the way up the mountain behind their swaying conveyance, but Great Great Grandfather had the satisfaction of knowing that at last there was direct weekly transportation through to the Massachusetts capital, even though it did wander over a good bit of New England to get there. One could now leave Middlebury any Thursday morning at four, plan on reaching the Inn at Hanover, New Hampshire, in time for supper that evening and be in Boston just two days later. Great Great Grandfather saw the first stagecoach drive into Middlebury the last week in September, 1808.

The following summer a thirty-six-hour connection with Troy was started, two stages a week. A shopper

could leave Middlebury at six Tuesday morning, and be in Troy Wednesday evening, going the direct route through Cornwall, Whiting, Castleton, Poultney, Granville, Cambridge, and Lansingburgh. The schedule of the Troy coach was arranged to connect at Middlebury with the Boston stage as well as with the new Burlington route, which had long been delayed because the turnpike had not been completed north of Vergennes.

With the arrival of stagecoaches, mail service changed almost immediately—the frequency changed, but service was not greatly improved. Previously mail had arrived with fair regularity every Monday afternoon in a saddle bag. Civil service examinations were not necessary to become a first class postman. Endurance in the saddle and an honest face were the major requirements. The Government simply advertised “proposals for carrying mails of the United States on the following Post Roads,” announced a virtually impossible schedule; a dollar forfeit for every thirty-minute delay, and the lowest bidder got the route.

The penalties for tardiness were overlooked. The mail arrived when it arrived. And though letters came several times a week under the new coach system, the hour was not to be counted on. Thunderstorms, wash-outs, loose horseshoes, and the necessity of waiting for a prospective passenger to finish packing his bag at a tavern were what really determined the mail schedule. The post office was the corner of a tavern, a law office, a store counter, or a hotel basement, depending entirely on the occupation of the postmaster. In the early years he didn't have to bother with postage stamps. He

merely had to figure the approximate mileage and write the amount paid in longhand in the upper right corner. Great Great Grandfather had to pay six cents on billets going thirty miles or less, eight cents up to sixty miles, a dime up to one hundred, scaled to twenty-five cents for a distance over four hundred and fifty miles. These figures applied only to a single sheet of paper on which the message was written and then ingeniously folded to be self-enclosing. No one bothered with envelopes and, of course, if two foolscap sheets could be detected in the fold, the rate was double, and triple for three sheets. Few people ever bothered to stop at the post office more often than every two or three weeks, and when Great Great Grandfather neglected to call for a letter that arrived unexpectedly, his name would appear in the weekly postal column of the newspaper, along with a dozen or more who were inclined to similar negligence.

The whole postal business was run on a basis as informal as a barber shop—no bureaucracy, no hurry—and there were everlasting feuds between postmaster and coach driver:

“We have for some time been perplexed at this office with a total want of accomodation, the secret spring of which is well known to us. The arrival of the mail varies by an exact account kept by us from 30 minutes to three hours, and although we keep an open office from 6 in the morning to 7 in the evening our meals excepted, yet the arival of the mail sometimes hapens when we are at breakfast or super. That the mail carier may accomodate us at such time, by giving an alarm (my house being but 36 rods

from the office) has been all I have sought or asked of them. To insure an accommodating spirit I have almost uniformly taken the mail from the street and when called for handed to the driver without his leaving the seat of his stage, but finding all this ineffectual and that they would carry the mail by without giving any alarm if we happened to be out or if we had stepped out of the office for a moment, when the mail was called for, they would go on without it. I had come to the determination to no more go into the street for the mail and so informed the contractor and driver. I had to send the mail the other night to Rutland at my own expense for the want of accommodation—Yesterday morning Stanley who brings the mail from Rutland threw down the mail in the street and drove back to the stage house. The office was and had been open for an hour. I did not go after it but when Skinner came for it I informed him that the mail had not been into the office and he must not pass the office without its being examined—he called me a Dam Old Scoundrel and that if I wanted the mail I might go into the street and pick it up and open it. I informed him I was ready to overhull it the moment he should deliver it and if he carried it on without opening it was at his peril. He with a volley of Oaths went on with the mail without delivering it. I thought it my duty and did inform the contractor of the failure, who thought proper to send after the mail and bring it back. This was the cause of the delay and the true state of the case—Mr. Skinner I expect you know better than I do, but I do not consider him a man of good moral character, of course, not competent to carry the mail, nor do I know he has been sworn and am unable to obtain a civil answer from him on any question. One thing is certain I shall report him to the proper department if he continues to treat me with such indecent uncivil language. I ask your pardon for thus troubling you with so lengthy a letter.”

Contrary to all Great Great Grandfather's religious principles, mail might arrive on Sunday as legally as on any other day; the Post Office Department required that "postmasters shall, on every day of the week keep open their post offices for the delivery of letters, packets, and papers at all reasonable hours." He was outspoken in his desire to stop this desecration of the Sabbath, "as destructive of our temporal prosperity as it was offensive to God," and enthusiastically welcomed a resolution that was at last introduced in the Senate in 1830:

"That the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads be instructed to report a bill, repealing so much of the act on the regulation of post offices as requires the delivery of letters, packets, and papers on the Sabbath; and further, to prohibit the transportation of the mail on that day."

He agreed with Senator Frelinghuysen that the Sabbath mail law was "an anomaly in our legislation . . . the rapid increase in our population, the emergencies of business, the rush of trade in all its various branches . . . have multiplied the encroachments on the Sabbath to such alarming extent that unless some check be interposed there is good reason to fear we shall in a very few years remember this day only in the melancholy spectacle of its universal desecration. It will be an era of portentous import. . . . I tremble at the prospect of my country. . . . I firmly believe that suspension of the mail . . . would present the claims of the Sabbath with such force of interest and might of influence as would establish and perpetuate it as an effective defense around our free institu-

tions. The mail arrested, and the post office closed on Sunday! by the solemn authority of Congress." Eventually the fourth commandment won out over Congressional law and Great Great Grandfather was pleased to note on his way to church that Middlebury post office doors were locked.

Sending money by mail was a precarious venture, indulged in only under circumstances of stress, and the postmaster relished the responsibility no more than the sender, for every time a sum disappeared he had to take time off from his shop or law office to play detective and answer complaints.

"On the 7th instant a letter was mailed for us in Charlotte containing \$535—on the 9th in the morning it came from Albany here, the mail having been carried past on the evening of the 8th returned here the next morning. When it arrived at the Post office here a small piece of the paper had been torn off and \$45 had been taken out. . . .

"As the letter was scarcely long enough in more than two or three offices (yours included) for such an operation we hope by pressing the enquiry immediately to be able to detect the rogue."

"I enclose you a letter sent the evening of the fifteenth last March from Manhattan addressed as you see, said to contain \$78 out of which has been taken \$10 done as you will perceive by cutting an aperture in the letter. . . . It is important to ascertain at what office . . . this fraud has been committed. . . . Do take all the pains necessary to bring to light this fraud. The publick will lose confidence in conveying money by mail unless this business can be ferretted out."

For mail as well as freight, the opening of the canal

from Lake Champlain to the Hudson served to speed up communication. Even before the "Great Northern Canal" was completed every little town with a navigable brook was laying plans for a new waterway to new business. Middlebury was among them. Its merchants began to realize that their big mercantile industry had been built up, geared to overland transportation. Either the town had to adjust itself quickly to the new easy means of getting produce to market or the lake towns would shortly steal the march. Agricultural communities more directly connected with water transportation began to claim: "Our lumber, our pork, our beef, potatoes and other heavy articles, constituting the most important staples of our country, are now transported to Albany by land at great expense. . . . By means of the Northern Canal we will be able to send our articles of produce by water at one tenth of the expense."

Hardly had the noise of celebrating the opening of the sixty-two-mile Northern Canal died down when more trumpeting to witness the completion of the "Great Western Canal" resounded in Middlebury.

"The celebration of the passage of the first boat from the Western Canal into the Hudson took place at Albany on the 8th instant in the presence of large concourse of people estimated at more than 50,000 who had assembled to join in the festivities of the day. This Canal was commenced on the 4th of July 1817, it is about 560 miles long, 40 feet wide at the top, 28 at the bottom and 4 feet deep, and is all completed excepting about 30 miles at its western extremity. It has 80 locks of 90 feet long, besides, guard locks, aqueducts, and several dams which are connected with it."



This was taking place practically in the dooryard of Vermont—and Middlebury. All that was needed to make the town a link in the great new system of transportation was a canal. One couldn't very logically be projected *down* the Otter Creek because of the falls; it had to go *up*. A group of enthusiasts hurried off to Montpelier and came back as enthusiastically with an act "incorporating a company for the purpose of connecting the waters of Otter Creek at Rutland with the Northern Canal at some convenient point of intersection in the State of New York."

On short order a committee of surveyors reported back to the corporation:

"The line of the Canal from Rutland through Castleton to the northern Canal will be twenty-five miles; fifteen of which will be in this state and ten in the state of New York. . . . Southerlands falls, which are supposed to present a rise of seventy or eighty feet, require seven or eight locks of wood, at an expense computed at two thousand dollars each. The creek from this town, with the exception of the above falls, to the mouth of the Canal is known to be a deep level stream, capable of being safely navigated with the removal of a very few obstructions, by steam boats and water craft of any serviceable description. Above the place of intersection, with the exception of Meads falls which can easily be surmounted the creek is said to be navigable to Wallingford, a distance of fifteen miles. Thus it may be seen that by excavating a canal from Rutland to the Northern Canal with the use of the waters of Otter Creek a navigable communication of seventy five miles will be opened into a country not surpassed by any section in the state in population, wealth and resources. . . . Middlebury, which would stand at the head of Navigation, is already a

large manufacturing town and its immediate neighborhood affords water sites for machinery to a vast extent."

There was need for haste. Already Vergennes, at the navigable end of the Creek, was offering competition that couldn't be met at Middlebury. A week after the surveyors' report was made a resolution was passed that "the contemplated route of the Otter Creek and Castleton River Canal to Whitehall presents advantages and facilities more favourable than any other in this part of the country; and that it is of the utmost importance to this section of the state to have said canal made."

But as in the case of the early turnpikes, first there had to be capital, and a canal would take more loose money than existed in the pockets of easy investors in Addison and Rutland Counties combined. Moreover, fly-by-night canal schemes were popping up all over the State. The Connecticut River was to be dredged and another group was calling for canals and tunnels through the Green Mountains to connect Montpelier with both the Connecticut and Lake Champlain. To a conservative Vermonter like Great Great Grandfather who had accumulated his small bank deposits by hard persistent labor, such vast expenditures loomed fantastic. And there were spokesmen to take his side:

"Not withstanding the hazard we run of incurring the contempt and ridicule of a certain phrenzied portion of the community, we will venture to prophesy that the success of New York will be the fruitful mother of a hundred schemes as ridiculous and abortive as theirs was grand and salutary. . . . We do not rank the improvement of the navigation of the Connecticut river among the chimeras—

When accomplished, it will make a convenient outlet for a rich and fertile section of country, peopled by 500,000 inhabitants. But in our humble apprehension, there is something in the idea of tunnelling the Green Mountains at Montpelier which must appear somewhat visionary to sober and unprejudiced reason. The immense expense, the mighty obstacles and the circumscribed section of the country to be accommodated, seem to us to forbid the expediency of attempting such a communication."

"History and experience both teach us that among all people and at all times there is something in the wind calculated to produce a feverish excitement in the public mind. The present inflammation is a kind of indiscriminate rage for canalling, everywhere, without regard to localities, expense, or probable success, and public advantage. . . ."

For the best part of a decade Middlebury and Rutland bandied the Otter Creek-Champlain Canal; new surveys followed old surveys, and when the enthusiasm of one group of agitators began to pale, it was picked up by another. By 1833 all possible routes had been outlined, and nearly everyone agreed that the most feasible one was from the Creek through Whiting and Shoreham to a bay one hundred yards south of Larrabee's Point. Statisticians combed the Otter Valley and produced estimates of around eight thousand tonnage which had now to be transported by wheels. A water course would double this tonnage and cut the transportation bill from \$21,000 to \$2,000. Engineers brought in an estimated cost of \$118,000 for the project and in February, 1834, books for subscription stock in the Otter Creek and Champlain Canal Company were opened at the Vermont Hotel.

But science and the conservatives had been at work elsewhere. Before the new Canal Company had a chance to see the most feeble prospects of reality they heard that a meeting of local merchants and citizens had been called to consider "communication with southern states by railroad." The bottom dropped out of the Canal Company overnight.

Great Great Grandfather never lived to see the railroad come to Middlebury in September 1849, but he spent his later years in expectation. He knew that it would be the only salvation for Middlebury business. Easy transportation elsewhere had already licked the town and spelled death to his old self-reliance.

So Middleburians continued to plod along behind their oxen and horses. The stage drivers to Boston and Montreal, to Albany and New York bought better horses, and increased their speed. More private money went into new and better turnpikes and more taxpayers' money went into new and better post roads. Periodically long caravans of wagons drove out of Middlebury for Boston, loaded down with meat and wheat, cotton goods and wool. And the ruts in the roads to Lake Champlain—where the canal might have been—grew deeper and more firmly packed. All along the lake from Larrabee's Point to Potash Bay new wharves, dockyards and storage houses went up to take care of Middlebury imports and exports. Products of India, China, Spain, and Scotland were hoisted onto the docks, and marble, iron, cheese and flour took their places in the holds of barges.

Steamboats had substituted sail, and steam was already replacing the tow lines on the canals. People now preferred to travel by boat rather than coach and Great Great Grandfather frequently found among the personal items in the newspaper such notices as: "Mr. Allen left Burlington in the steamboat *Phoenix* for Washington." It seemed incredible that this vast distance which would have been covered on horseback in his youth could now be done in luxurious comfort by water. Fashionable ladies and gentlemen could embark at Bridport on a steam-towed barge for Troy, New York, and London. One could take the canal packet at Vergennes and spend eight lazy days in transit to Buffalo, or one of the speedier, more luxurious barges—with passenger cabins—leaving twice a week, and make the distance in half the time.

But the ordinary citizen of modest means still traveled behind his—or her—own horse, and at night in some picturesque tavern or private home jotted into a diary the trivial incidents of the day:

"Proceed to Winslows in Woodstock; Have refreshment for ourselves and horse. . . . I cannot describe the scenery, but mountains, hills, and hillocks of every shape surrounded us, water in every form each side, dashing over the rocks, foaming down the precipices, gliding along in narrow winding rivulets, and pouring over dams and out of water spouts. . . . We refresh our horse with oats. . . . We must speak of the goodness of God in preserving us from the lightnings dart and from the rain which poured forth as soon as we were under shelter. God gave uncommon speed to the Animal. . . . We called at a Tavern, the sign 'Bloody Brook'. . . . After refreshing ourselves and horse, we

proceed. . . . On our way pluck leaves from the sassafras and leaves of wintergreen, and see the swamp whortle berry bush. Pass over the Canal Bridge. . . . Pick running blackberries by the way. . . . Bate the horse at 9. . . . Pay for a lemon 3 cents, gingerbread 12, bread and crackers 12. . . . Our horse lame, one shoe off. . . . Pay 10 cents for setting the shoe. . . . Before 1, have placed on the table before us a roast turkey, squash, beans, sweet corn, cucumbers, potatoes, good bread, butter, cheese, swamp whortle, and custard pie and good ice water. . . . Leave 25 cents to pay for getting the check brace fastened. . . . Pay for horse-keeping, lodging, trouble and 8 quarts of oats, 75 cents. . . . Have an early start. Go up and down many a steep. . . . Pay for a pye 12 cents. The road mountainous, and in some places dangerous, but kept from harm. . . . May we never forget that Hand that had led us in all safety all our journey through. . . . Pass over the rough roads and down the stony mountain until we and our Horse were tired and . . . desire to reach home. . . .”

Great Great Grandmother knew how to handle a horse as well as did Great Great Grandfather. She could harness the animal, hitch him into the wagon, stable and bed him. She knew when to water him and when not to, how many oats he was entitled to, and how much hay. She knew enough to take the bit out of his mouth before letting him crop grass, she knew what to do if the rhythm of his pace began to change because of a slipshod foot. She'd sooner put her own children to bed without a Saturday bath than stable a sweating horse without first currying and blanketing him. She loved the animal and recognized her utter dependence on him. The horse made their acres a farm, their community a society.

Horse and buggy by no means went with Great Great Grandfather and Great Great Grandmother, but Dobbin began to have a little more leisure time in the stable. For another half century and more he continued to make the short hauls to town and to the next towns, but the long excursions across New England became less frequent. He couldn't keep up the pace of steam and the railroad—nor the pace that the next generations tried to set; wheels moved steadier and faster—wheels of conveyance, commerce, and industry, and none of the Middlebury wheels seemed any longer to turn quite as fast as those in the big mill towns of southern New England.

From the very beginning the productive activities of Great Great Grandfather and his neighbors were geared to local consumption. Subsistence involved both farming and manufacture. From the 1790's to the 1840's their community was a little universe sufficient unto itself. The lake boats, the horse-drawn freight caravans, and the stagecoach brought in the luxuries, the refinements, and some of the raw materials, but town economy was not dependent on them. Great Great Grandfather's heart, soul, and energies were devoted to community projects and Middlebury had lived as if the world would be ever thus. But the new methods of communication and travel brought new devotions to the new generation.

The coming of an industrial age caught the town unaware. No one sensed what was happening until it was too late to set the stage for it. A new standard of living was welcomed; capitalistic interests entered the

town as a thief in the night and became a vital part of the community life before anyone realized what big money could do to a little town. The new order first took over agriculture. Great Great Grandfather had always been content to make his own living for his own family from his own acres, with a decent margin of surplus to exchange for other needs which his neighbors could provide. Counting on a big family and home labor, there was a good living in the system, a home built from pine in the wood lot, a table from the garden, clothes from the flax field and the spinning wheel, but there was no money in it. The middle of the century brought from the south a new respect for monetary exchange rather than vegetable exchange. Not until one raised a big crop of a single item could a farmer begin to see cash rather than small goods. So Great Great Grandfather's children took to the first big profit scheme that came their way: sheep raising. The old home crafts, the little mills at the falls, and kitchen gardens went by the boards and every pasture and meadow was filled with sheep. The capitalists built huge wool depots on the Lake and with the first load that Great Great Grandfather's children took there for sorting, processing, and shipment, they became little men in a big industry. They didn't know it at the time: the checks rolled in and pretty machine-made furniture took the place of the homemade Windsors. Maids took over the kitchen and new class lines were drawn. The family moved from the kitchen to the dining room and parlor. Great Great Grandfather's ideas of democratic living disappeared. The world heard about Addison County



sheep and wanted them. Bigger money could be made in sheep breeding than in wool, so the children picked the prize rams and took them to the West, to Africa, to Australia. They returned to discover that they were building competition for themselves that they couldn't match. There were broader grazing lands and better grass west and south. New horizons had been discovered and they looked good—better than Middlebury's narrow horizon. The West was beckoning, California gold, and then the Civil War. Capital won and Middlebury lost. For a brief time the town had lived as a little cog in a great economic machine and after a while the cog wasn't even big enough to serve the machine.

The blacksmith shops, the watering troughs, the covered bridges, the church sheds still stand as monuments to him and to them—Great Great Grandmother and Great Great Grandfather. Once the Gods of steam, capitalism, and the train began to supplant their Gods, their day was done. The long leisurely gossip of blacksmith shop society was silenced—to be replaced by stop-and-go gas stations; empty pews followed empty church sheds; the center of Sunday morning worship moved from Pastor Merrill's church to Father Leonard's church; "Not Faster Than a Walk" signs were torn down from the covered bridges and the covered bridges came down too, to make room for steel and concrete; the watering troughs were dragged away; the gig, chaise, coach, and sulky went to the museum, and what was left of Great Great Grandfather's belongings went to the antique shop. The golden age of Middlebury

petered out. The era of community self-reliance, self-dependence, self-integration, self-significance was dead. It went with our great great grandparents.

Altogether there are probably fifty plate glass show windows on Main Street and Merchant's Row, but except at the bakery, the grocer's, and the printer's there isn't an object behind all that glass that was made in Middlebury. The town is only a little smaller now than it was the day Great Great Grandfather rode through it for the last time in his homemade coffin. From the outside, most of the houses are the same except for the new paint, the dormer windows, and the ells; the smart imitations from Cape Cod and God-knows-where are new; they look it and don't quite show his touch. Eminently an industrious town, anyone would say, passing through on Route 7, knowing nothing about all the machinery that once turned at the falls, nor about what went on in Great Great Grandmother's kitchen.

The inventive spirit is gone, but not quite all of Great Great Grandfather's character—the stubbornness, the slow humor, the strong convictions, the big rough hands. He lived long and well; the gospel he spread by deed and word could never perish entirely—not in Vermont. You see him still once in a while behind you in Jerry Trudeau's barber shop reading the *Register*, the hair pretty thick around the collar. You see him at the paint shop, turning over wallpaper samples with Great Great Grandmother; they're fixing to repaper the kitchen some night next spring after chores. You see him rise to restate a motion at the town meeting in March or holding forth at a Town Forum arguing

democracy, and he's still present in minority at the College faculty meetings. The College boys give him an all too familiar "Howdy Gramp" at the corner of the First National; they figure it's their town now, not his. He doesn't say anything, but he disagrees.

## SOURCES

THE Sheldon Museum at Middlebury is unique among village museums. Among the thousands of items in it, practically all were once a part of local homes and stores. A kitchen, a student room, a library, a bedroom, a tool shed, and workshop have been refurnished with local materials quite as they might have appeared during the nineteenth century. From this rich store, the content of the book has been largely assembled and the author wishes to express deep gratitude to Miss Florence Allen, Curator of the Museum, for her patient help in making available hundreds of manuscripts for use in the book. Also to Mr. Wyman Parker, Middlebury College Librarian, thanks are due for his assistance in locating other documents.

### I. *Their Town*

GENERAL: Middlebury newspaper advertisements. Sheldon Museum Letters.

DIRECT QUOTATIONS: pgs. 4 and 5, *National Standard*, Aug. 16, 1825; pg. 8, *Mercury*, Oct. 27, 1802; pg. 8, Miller advertisement, *Mercury*, Mar. 30, 1803; pg. 9, Bloomery advertisement, *Mercury*, Jan. 5, 1803; pg. 9, Letter from Edgar L. Ormsbee to Charles Linsley, Oct. 16, 1825, mns. Sheldon Museum; pg. 10, "carpets, coverlets," etc., *National Standard*, Apr. 11, 1820; pg. 10, "They would say . . .," *Peoples Press*, June 2, 1840; pgs. 11 and 12, Judd patent, *National Standard*, Sept. 24, 1822; pgs.

12 and 13, music advertisement, *Peoples Press*, Nov. 10, 1840; pg. 13, Butcher shop advertisement, *Mercury*, Aug. 24, 1808; pg. 14, Belden Seymour advertisement, *National Standard*, Dec. 28, 1819; pg. 15, "Look Out . . .," *National Standard*, Feb. 11, 1823; pg. 15, Progressive dun, *Mercury*, June 13, 1802; pg. 16, "Pity the cravings . . .," *Mercury*, Aug. 31, 1808; pg. 16, "To dun or not to dun . . .," *National Standard*, May 22, 1816; pg. 17, "Run Away . . .," *Mercury*, May 22, 1805; pg. 18, "\$20. Rewards . . ." and "Pumpkin Seeds," *Mercury*, Sept. 16, 1807.

## II. *Their Homes*

GENERAL: Middlebury newspapers, "New England Cookery," compiled by Lucy Emerson, Montpelier edition printed by Josiah Parks, 1808.

DIRECT QUOTATIONS: pgs. 20 and 21, Census, *Peoples Press*, Apr. 7, 1840; pgs. 22 and 23, Spinning and sewing achievements, "Journal of Sarah Weeks Sheldon," c. 1835, mms. Sheldon Museum; pg. 23, Maple syrup recipe, *National Standard*, Apr. 8, 1829; pgs. 24 and 25, Cider recipe, *National Standard*, Sept. 20, 1825; pg. 25, Pickled pigs' feet, "New England Cookery"; pgs. 26 and 27, Roasting pig, op. cit.; pg. 27, Preserving butter, op. cit.; pg. 28, Plum Cake recipe, op. cit.; pg. 29, Ink, *National Standard*, Aug. 28, 1816; pg. 30, Hastings and Warren advertisements, *Mercury*, Jan. 1806; pg. 30, Huntington's bookshop, *Mercury*, Aug. 11, 1802; pg. 30, "Ornamental hair work," *American*, Feb. 10, 1835; pg. 32, Window glass, "Cabinet of Useful Arts and Manufactures," published by Caleb Bartlett, New York, 1827; pg. 34, Orr's Patent Air-tight Stove, *Peoples Press*, Dec. 31, 1839; pg. 34, Mrs. Kilburn's advertisement, *National Standard*, June 4, 1817; pgs. 35 and 36, Corsets, *National Standard*, Aug. 27, 1817; pg. 37, Huston and Hart advertisement, *American*, June 24, 1834; pgs. 37 and 38, "To see a man's lofty mind . . .," *Mercury*, Sept. 16, 1806; pg. 38, "When a man gets up . . .," *Mercury*, Jan. 20, 1802; pg. 39, Sherlock, *Mercury*, Dec. 16, 1801.

III. *Their Neighbors*

GENERAL: "History of Middlebury and Addison County," Swift.

DIRECT QUOTATIONS: pg. 42, "I find it pleases . . .," Letter of H. H. Stewart, Dec. 6, 1825, mns. Sheldon Museum; pg. 47, "The noted horse . . .," *Middlebury Mercury*, May 26, 1802; pg. 47, "Gamaliel Painter's full-blooded . . .," *Vermont Mirror*, May 5, 1813; pg. 48, "If posable I will calm . . .," Letter from Gamaliel Painter to Moses Sheldon, July 6, 1797, mns. Sheldon Museum; pgs. 49 and 50, "The influence of Painter . . .," "History of Middlebury and Addison County," Swift, pg. 244; pg. 50, "a man of honor . . .," Brainerd Kellogg, Oration, Pioneer Centennial Celebration; pgs. 51 and 52, "I have never had the benefit . . .," "Disclosure of Facts" in Consequence of a Decree For Alimony by the Supreme Court, Addison County, January Term, 1823, Against Elias Hall; pg. 52, "Guns and Bayonets . . .," *Middlebury Mercury*, Nov. 6, 1805; pgs. 53 and 54, "The reader may judge . . .," "Disclosure of Facts"; pgs. 54, 55 and 56, Affidavits, op. cit.; pg. 57, "Deer Sir," Letter from Louise Hagar to her husband, Jan. 30, 1815, mns. Sheldon Museum; pg. 57, "Little Clary . . .," Same, March 19, 1815; pgs. 58 and 59, "At our time of life . . .," "Sermon on the Character and Services of Rev. Thomas A. Merrill, D.D.," by Josiah F. Goodhue; pg. 60, "to legitimate reasonings . . .," op. cit.; pg. 60, "In nice metaphysical reasonings . . .," op. cit.; pg. 60, "If people would become . . .," op. cit.; pg. 63, "I have time to tell . . .," Letter from L. Harris to E. W. Judd, Oct. 2, 1833, mns. Sheldon Museum; pgs. 63 and 64, "Seeing no house . . .," "History of Middlebury and Addison County," Swift, footnote, pg. 420; pg. 64, Bartholomew's poem, op. cit., pg. 241.

IV. *Their Politics*

GENERAL: Town Records (Town Clerk's Office); Village Records and By-Laws (Sheldon Museum); Newspapers.

DIRECT QUOTATIONS: taken from Town or Village Records as indicated in text. Pg. 70, "Whereas Fanny . . .," *Mercury*, Dec. 24, 1806; pg. 70, "The Serpent has beguiled . . .," *National Standard*, Nov. 2, 1819; pgs. 83 and 84, Jefferson "correspondence," *Mercury*, Dec. 23, 1801; pg. 84, "Here we have the plan . . .," *American*, Feb. 21, 1832.

### V. *Their Religion*

GENERAL: Letters in Sheldon Museum; Sermons; Town Records; Hymn Books.

DIRECT QUOTATIONS: pgs. 86 and 87, Letter from Eunice G. Weeks to Anna Holland Weeks, 1792; pg. 87, "Woods make people . . .," "A Narrative of a Tour Through Vermont," 1789, by the Rev. Nathan Perkins, Elm Tree Press, Woodstock, 1930; pg. 89, "Come to go to bed . . .," Journal of Asaph Drake, mns. Sheldon Museum; pg. 90, Meeting house location, Town Reports; pg. 91, Foot characterization, "A Narrative of a Tour Through Vermont"; pg. 92, Merrill on Religion, Sermons, Middlebury College Library; pg. 93, Proudfit Sermon, Miscellany, Middlebury College Library; pgs. 95 and 96, Church singing, "National Psalmist," Preface, Tappan, Whittemore and Mason, Boston, 1849; pgs. 98 and 99, Jedediah Burdard, "Sermons, Addresses and Exhortations," compiled by C. G. Eastman, Burlington, 1836 (Sheldon Museum); pg. 100, "In a most distressful . . .," Letter from Holland Weeks to Ebenezer Weeks, Nov. 9, 1809, mns. Sheldon Museum; pg. 101, Shifts, "History of the Congregational Church, Middlebury, Vermont," Pilgrim Press, Boston, 1913; pg. 102, "This afternoon Brother Fisk . . .," "A Memoir of Pliny Fisk," by Alvan Bond, Crocker and Brewster, Boston, 1828; pgs. 102 and 103, "I have a request to make . . .," Letter from Sukey Allen to Charity Bryant, Apr. 16, 1835, mns. Sheldon Museum; pg. 104, Christian Herald platform, *Christian Herald*, Oct. 9, 1816; pgs. 104 and 105, "Religion in a Female . . .," *National Standard*, Oct. 24, 1820; pg. 106, Methodist Church, "History of Middlebury and Addison County," Samuel Swift, Copeland,

Middlebury, 1859; pg. 106, Catholic Church, Diary of Bishop Fenwick, "Pioneer Priests," article by Thomas F. O'Connor, *Middlebury News Letter*, Mar. 1939.

## VI. *Their Entertainment*

GENERAL: Newspapers; Song Books.

DIRECT QUOTATIONS: pg. 108, Procession, *Mercury*, July 7, 1802; pgs. 109 and 110, McDunough celebration, *National Standard*, 1816; pg. 111, First fair, *National Standard*, Oct. 10, 1820; pgs. 111 and 112, Second fair, op. cit., Oct. 9, 1821; pgs. 112 and 113, Thanksgiving proclamation, *Mercury*, Apr. 14, 1802; pgs. 113 and 114, Community singing, *National Standard*, May 1, 1821; pg. 115, "Come let's sing . . .," altered from Marachner, Boston Glee Book, 1839, Wilkins, Carter and Palmer Co.; pg. 116, "He who trusts . . .," Words from German, music by Eisenhofer, op. cit.; pg. 117, Habits of young men, *National Standard*, Feb. 27, 1821; pg. 118, Smoking, *Mercury*, Nov. 28, 1804; pg. 120, Exhibition, *National Standard*, May 1, 1821; pg. 121, College Exhibitions, op. cit., Apr. 19, 1825; pg. 121, Theatre, op. cit., Mar. 16, 1821; pgs. 122 and 123, Theatre review, op. cit., Mar. 13, 1821; pg. 123, "Every Christian . . .," op. cit., Apr. 10, 1821; pgs. 123 and 124, Lion's advertisement, *Mercury*, Aug. 7, 1807; pg. 124, Mummy, *National Standard*, June 15, 1828; pg. 124, "a famous Belona Organ," *National Standard*, Aug. 7, 1821.

## VII. *Their Education*

GENERAL: Mns. in Sheldon Museum; Newspapers; "A Plan for Improving Female Education," Emma Willard, Reprint of second edition of 1819, Middlebury College, 1918.

DIRECT QUOTATIONS: pg. 128, "The President had lost his wig," "A Sophomoric Poem" read before the Philamathesian Society, Middlebury College, mns. Sheldon Museum; pgs. 129 and 130 "It must constitute . . ." Sermon, Joshua Bates "Mis-



cellany," Middlebury College Library; pgs. 130 and 131, "Rules to be observed," "Life of Jehudi Ashmun," by Ralph R. Gurley, Printed by James C. Dunn, Washington, 1835; pgs. 131 and 132, Pedagogy, *Mercury*, Nov. 5, 1802; pgs. 132 and 133, "Ten dollars a month . . .," altered from *Mercury*, Feb. 2, 1803; pg. 136, "in the several branches . . .," *Mercury*, Oct. 9, 1805; pgs. 136 and 137, "Why should Females . . .," *American*, June 25, 1833; pg. 137, Miss Strong's advertisement, *Mercury*, Nov. 5, 1802; pg. 138, "To the performance . . .," *Mercury*, Mar. 3, 1802; pg. 138, "building a plank walk . . .," "History of Middlebury and Addison County," Swift; pg. 138, "particular attention . . .," *Mercury*, Jan. 11, 1804; pg. 139, "The winter of 1807-08 . . .," "History of Middlebury and Addison County," Swift; pg. 140, "Magna Carta," "A Plan for Improving Female Education"; pg. 141, Lampoon, *Mercury*, Sept. 10, 1806; pg. 142, "young ladies who design . . ." and "all the useful . . .," *National Standard*, Nov. 13, 1821; pg. 143, "To preserve a government . . .," *Mercury*, Sept. 15, 1802; pg. 143, "Six trial lessons . . .," *Vermont Mirror*, July 7, 1813; pgs. 143 and 144, "Engrossing Secretary's . . .," *National Standard*, March 14, 1820; pg. 144, Packard, *Peoples Press*, Sept. 22, 1840; pgs. 144 and 145, "Few places . . .," *National Standard*, Jan. 22, 1817; pg. 145, Meilleur, op. cit., Dec. 10, 1822; pg. 145, Hanilon, op. cit., May 13, 1823; pg. 145, Mead, *Vermont Mirror*, May 1, 1816; pg. 145, Bulch, *National Standard*, Jan. 8, 1828; pg. 145, Doctor Allen, op. cit., May 21, 1822; pg. 145, Anti-Slavery Society, *Free Press*, Sept. 27, 1836; pg. 146, "A laudable anxiety . . .," *National Standard*, Jan. 28, 1829; pg. 146, "It is infinitely better . . .," *Mercury*, Dec. 8, 1802.

### VIII. *Their Medicine*

GENERAL: Medical books listed in Middlebury Library 1800-1840; Newspapers; Letters in Sheldon Museum.

DIRECT QUOTATIONS: pg. 149, "Take of the pectoral decoction . . .," Sydenham's "Works on Acute and Chronic Dis-

eases," 1788; pgs. 150 and 151, Family illness, Letter from Eunice Griswald to Anna H. Weeks, Feb. 4, 1792, mns. Sheldon Museum; pg. 151, "No person . . .," *Mercury*, Aug. 11, 1802; pg. 151, New Haven, *National Standard*, Feb. 1, 1820; pgs. 151 and 152, "premature labor," op. cit., Jan. 18, 1820; pg. 152, "obliged to lay the ribs . . .," op. cit., Dec. 12, 1820; pg. 155, "Those departments . . .," *National Standard*, Feb. 13, 1821; pg. 156, "Among the varied . . .," op. cit., Nov. 5, 1828; pg. 157, Thompson, op. cit., Jan. 28, 1823; pg. 157, Burr Hall, op. cit., May 7, 1817; pg. 157, Sun Flower seed, op. cit., July 4, 1820; pg. 157, Dog bite specific, *Mercury*, May 12, 1802; pg. 158, "glass that nearly suits," *Vermont Mirror*, Nov. 10, 1813; pgs. 158 and 159, Mail treatment, Letter to Charity Bryant, Apr. 16, 1824; pg. 159, D. Rosseter, *Mercury*, June 24, 1807; pgs. 159 and 160, Natten, *Mercury*, July 19, 1809.

### IX. *Their Reading*

GENERAL: Almanacs; Newspapers; Books published in Middlebury.

DIRECT QUOTATIONS: pgs. 162, 163 and 164, all quotations from New York and Vermont Almanac, 1801, R. Moffitt and Co., Troy; pg. 164, "the more men . . .," *Mercury*, Oct. 20, 1802; pg. 165, "press in a free government," op. cit., Dec. 4, 1805; pg. 165, *Mercury* advertisement, op. cit., Dec. 23, 1801; pgs. 166 and 167, "Passenger in Yesterday's Coach . . .," *Vermont Mirror*, Aug. 31, 1814; pg. 167, "Glorious News," *National Standard*, Feb. 15, 1824; pg. 168, "It is a curious fact . . .," *Mercury*, Dec. 29, 1802; pg. 170, Seymour advertisement, op. cit., Jan. 27, 1802; pg. 170, Drury advertisement, op. cit., July 28, 1802; pg. 170, Redfield advertisement, op. cit., Feb. 10, 1802; pg. 171, Jones advertisement, op. cit., Dec. 23, 1801; pgs. 171 and 172, Hat factory, *Vermont Mirror*, July 14, 1813; pg. 172, Luther Drury advertisement, *Mercury*, Jan. 20, 1802; pg. 172, David Parkhill advertisement, op. cit., Jan. 20, 1802; pg. 172, "Taken up . . .," op. cit., Sept. 7, 1803; pg. 173, "Strayed

. . .," op. cit., Oct. 6, 1803; pg. 174, Godey's Lady's Book, *Peoples Press*, Dec. 15, 1840; pgs. 174 and 175, Novel reading, *Mercury*, Sept. 22, 1802; pg. 176, "Children should be furnished . . .," *Mercury*, Nov. 5, 1802; pg. 177, Center library, *Mercury*, Jan. 4, 1804.

### X. *Their Communication*

GENERAL: Newspapers; "Travels in New England and New York," Timothy Dwight, New Haven, 1821; "History of Middlebury and Addison County," Swift; Records of Center Turnpike Co., mns. Sheldon Museum; "Social Ferment in Vermont," Ludlum.

DIRECT QUOTATIONS: pg. 180, "hemlock forest," "History of Middlebury and Addison County"; pgs. 181 and 182, Timothy Dwight, "Travels in New England and New York," vol. 2; pg. 182, Center Turnpike, Records of Company; pg. 184, "Roads in the country . . .," *Mercury*, Dec. 16, 1801; pgs. 184 and 185, Center Turnpike, Company Records; pgs. 187 and 188, Mail complaint, "Letter from John Conant to George Cleveland, Dec. 12, 1827," mns. Sheldon Museum; pg. 189, Senate resolution, Preamble and Resolution to speech by Mr. Frelinghuysen, "Miscellany," Middlebury College Library; pg. 190, "On the 7th . . .," Letter from Finch S. Hart to George Cleveland, Jan. 10, 1838, mns. Sheldon Museum; pg. 190, "I inclose . . .," Letter from Shale to George Cleveland, March 9, 1829, mns. Sheldon Museum; pg. 191, "Our lumber . . .," *National Standard*, Nov. 23, 1819; pg. 191, "the celebration . . .," op. cit., Oct. 21, 1823; pg. 192, "incorporating a company," op. cit., Feb. 28, 1826; pgs. 192 and 193, "the line of the canal . . .," op. cit., Feb. 28, 1826; pg. 193, "the contemplated route . . .," op. cit., Mar. 7, 1826; pgs. 193 and 194, "Notwithstanding the hazard . . .," op. cit., Feb. 7, 1826; pg. 195, Railroad, *Free Press*, Aug. 11, 1835; pg. 196, Mr. Allen, *National Standard*, Sept. 9, 1823; pgs. 196 and 197, Diary, Diary of Sylvia Drake 1838, mns. Sheldon Museum.









